Bengaluru Wednesday, December 31, 2025 Pages 14 Vol 78 No 361 ₹7

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DH

DECCAN HERALD

The Power of Good

# RCB lose Perry days before WPL

**The Australian legend cites personal reasons for withdrawal as the franchise names replacement**

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**World**

**Beijing mediated in India-Pak tensions, says Chinese FM Wang Yi** P.10

**State**

**Illegal betting: Cong MLA KC Veerendra Puppy granted bail** P.4

**State**

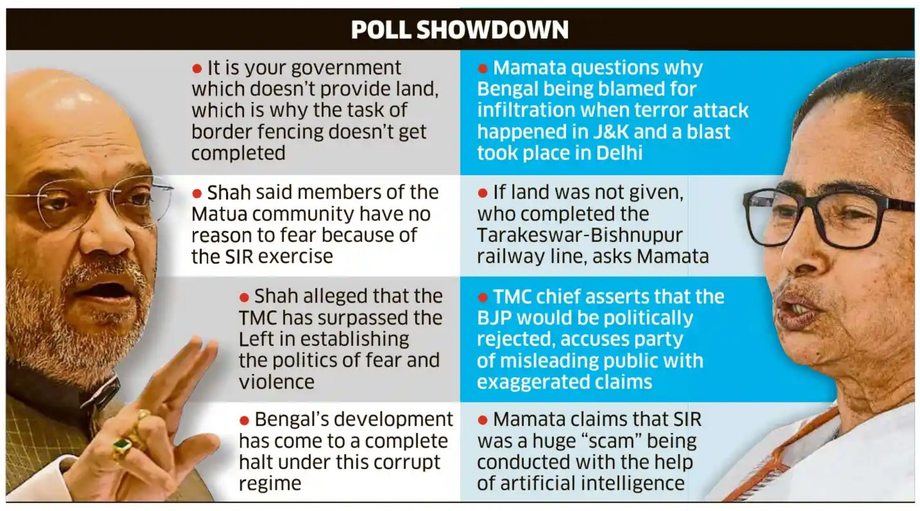
CM writes to Modi on VB-G RAM G P.5

**World**

Trump warns Iran of possible strike P.10

# Shah, Mamata in war of words over 'infiltration'

**POLL SHOWDOWN**



- It is your government which doesn't provide land, which is why the task of border fencing doesn't get completed
- Shah said members of the Matua community have no reason to fear because of the SIR exercise
- Shah alleged that the TMC has surpassed the Left in establishing the politics of fear and violence
- Bengal's development has come to a complete halt under this corrupt regime
- Mamata questions why Bengal being blamed for infiltration when terror attack happened in J&K and a blast took place in Delhi
- If land was not given, who completed the Tarakeswar-Bishnupur railway line, asks Mamata
- TMC chief asserts that the BJP would be politically rejected, accuses party of misleading public with exaggerated claims
- Mamata claims that SIR was a huge "scam" being conducted with the help of artificial intelligence



## Bengal demography changed, BJP will come to power in state, says HM

**ANIRBAN BHAUMIK**
KOLKATA, DHNS

Union Home Minister Amit Shah and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee were engaged a war of words on Tuesday. While Shah accused Mamata of facilitating illegal migration from Bangladesh, the Trinamool leader demanded his resignation "for his failure to curb infiltration of terrorists from Pakistan and prevent terrorist attacks in India".

Shah alleged that Mamata's Trinamool Congress government was endangering national security by facilitating illegal migration from Bangladesh and allowing them to settle down in West Bengal for vested political interests.

Mamata, on the other hand, sought to turn the tables on Shah, tacitly referring to the April 22 terrorist attack in Pahalgam in Jammu & Kashmir, and the November 10 explosion near Red Fort in Delhi. She blamed him for failing to stop infiltration of terrorists from Pakistan and areas illegally occupied by Pakistan into Kashmir.

Mamata's nephew and the TMC general secretary, Abhishek Banerjee, also hit back at Shah, calling him the "most unsuccessful Union Home Minister" India had after it had attained its Independence.

"Only Bhaipo (nephew) has the right to make money, not the common man," Shah had targeted Abhishek earlier in the day.

"Infiltration happening along the (India-Bangladesh) borders (in West Bengal) is not an issue limited only to the state. It is now a matter of national security. We have to save the culture of the country," Shah told journalists in Kolkata, adding that illegal migration from neighbouring Bangladesh to India had "dangerously changed the demography" of West Bengal. "If we have to ensure the safety of our country, we need a patriotic government here which will seal the borders. Mamata Banerjee cannot do this, only the BJP can."

The BJP's chief poll strategist said that the infiltration of illegal migrants from across the border would be the key poll issue of the saffron party in West Bengal.

He not only accused the TMC government of abetting illegal migration from Bangladesh, but also promised that when the BJP comes to power in West Bengal after winning two-thirds seats in April 2026, a "strong national grid" would be built to ensure that not even a bird would not be able to cross over from the neighbouring country, let alone humans.

▸ Mamata, Page 5

# Kogilu residents must wait 2 months for flats

## Work pending on complex; poor access to building

**DH SPECIAL**

**SNEHA RAMESH**
BENGALURU, DHNS

While the state government has promised displaced families from the Kogilu eviction site that they will be allotted a flat at the multi-storied apartment in Baiyappanahalli in Byatarayanapura, the work at the six-block apartment complex is yet to be completed.

When this reporter visited the apartment building on Tuesday, workers at the site told *DH* that they would need at least two months to complete the work.

"Some finishing work is still pending. Installation of elevators, operationalising the sewage treatment plant (STP) and other minor works are still pending. We will be able to complete the work in another two months," one of the supervisors said.

However, senior officials from the Rajiv Gandhi Housing Corporation Ltd maintained that they intend to allot flats in the E and F Blocks of the complex and the work there can be expedited.

"A majority of the work in E Block has been completed and in the F Block there is some work like installation of lifts pending. If the government goes ahead with the allotment and if the families have to move in, we can expedite and complete the work in a week," a senior official said.

### 'Can't raise money'

**Though the government has said that those evicted would have to pay only Rs 2.5 lakh for the flats, the families said paying so much even with a loan was impossible.** Page 3

### Questions over relief to displaced

**Human rights activists backed the state government's decision to provide alternative housing to displaced families, stating that the government should ensure similar facilities to all homeless. This comes at a time when questions are being raised over allotting sites to affected families.** Page 3

While there are no problems with the apartment complex, the approach road is dotted with sand and cement factories, making it difficult to commute.

Fine dust particles fill the air for at least two kilometres owing to the factories and transportation of sand and cement.

The proximity to the Mittaganahalli landfill is yet another concern. That apart, the nearest bus stop is at least five km away, making commute difficult.

The apartment complex has six blocks with a total of 1,187 one BHK flats with each flat having a carpet area of 585 sq ft.

Of these, 579 flats have already been booked.

▸ Kogilu, Page 5

# CM tussle: Cong must decide before Feb, says Parameshwara

BENGALURU, DHNS

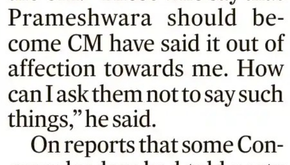
Home Minister G Parameshwara on Tuesday said the Congress high command would have to decide on the chief ministerial tussle before budget preparation starts in February.

"Someone will have to prepare the budget, right? The budget preparation will begin in February. There is roughly one month. If the high command has to decide anything, they should do so before that," Parameshwara said.

"The budget has to be presented based on the assurances we have given to the people of the state. It will be done," Parameshwara said.

CM Siddaramaiah said in November that he would present the 2026-27 Budget.

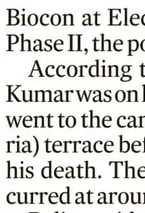
During the recent Congress Working Committee meet in Delhi, Parameshwara's supporters held a demonstration demanding that he be made the CM. "Those who say that Prameshwara should become CM have said it out of affection towards me. How can I ask them not to say such things," he said.



On reports that some Congress leaders had told party general secretary K C Venugopal that Parameshwara should become the CM, the home minister said: "The Congress high command will have all the information. They will get information from the general secretary and get other details in their own way."

# Biocon staffer falls to death; suicide suspected

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** A 26-year-old employee of Biocon in Bengaluru fell to his death from the company building on Tuesday, which the police suspect was a case of death by suicide.



**Anantha Kumar**

The deceased is S Anantha Kumar from Banashankari. Kumar was working in the finance department of Biocon at Electronics City, Phase II, the police said.

According to the police, Kumar was on his phone and went to the canteen (cafeteria) terrace before falling to his death. The incident occurred at around 5 pm.

Police said the body has been shifted to a hospital in Electronics City. Page 2

# Bangladesh's first woman prime minister Khaleda Zia dies

**DHAKA, PTI:** Bangladesh's first woman prime minister Khaleda Zia, who played a major role in restoring democracy after a period of tumultuous military rule and dominated the country's politics for decades, died on Tuesday after a prolonged illness. She was 80.

**Khaleda Zia**

"My mother is no more," Zia's son and Bangladesh Nationalist Party's acting Chairman Trique Rahman said.

Zia was a three-time prime minister and held the position of chairperson of BNP.

Zia's family members, including her son Rahman, his wife Zubaida Rahman, and their daughter Zaima, were present at the hospital. BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir was also at the hospital.

Zia's funeral will be held on Wednesday at Parliament's South Plaza and the adjoining Manik Mia Avenue, Law Advisor Asif Nazrul said.

She will later be laid to rest with full state honours beside the grave of her husband, former president and BNP founder Ziaur Rahman, at Zia Udyan in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in Dhaka, Nazrul said after a meeting of the interim government's Advisory Council. Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus announced a three-day state mourning and a one-day general holiday.

### Jaishankar to attend funeral

**External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will represent India at the funeral of former Bangladesh prime minister Khaleda Zia in Dhaka on Wednesday.**

# Clarify on drug factory ops, city top cop tells Maha agency

**DH SPECIAL**

**MANJUNATH SHETTAR**
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Bengaluru city police commissioner has sought a comprehensive clarification from the Maharashtra Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) on the methodology used to assess the value of narcotics seized during the recent drug factory bust in the city, raising questions over the nearly Rs 56-crore valuation publicly claimed by the Maharashtra agency.

According to senior police officials, the Bengaluru police have formally asked the ANTF chief to furnish a detailed valuation breakup, including the stage of processing at which the narcotic substance was seized, its purity percentage, the market rates applied and whether the calculation was based on wholesale value or street-level pricing.

City police commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh said narcotics valuation must adhere to uniform, nationally accepted standards, particularly in inter-state operations.

"The valuation must follow standard parameters. We have asked the ANTF chief to share calculations along with the technical basis for arriving at the final figure," he said.

▸ Drug, Page 5

## TOP FLIGHT

**A Dhruv-NG helicopter during its inaugural flight at Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd in Bengaluru on Tuesday. The next generation multi-role civil helicopter is billed as an alternative to imported light twin-engine helicopters.** DH PHOTO

# Quickly

### Visually impaired can write 2nd PUC exam digitally

The Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board has allowed visually-impaired 2nd PUC students to appear for exams using computer or laptops.
Details on Page 4

### Rs 4,666-cr defence deal signed

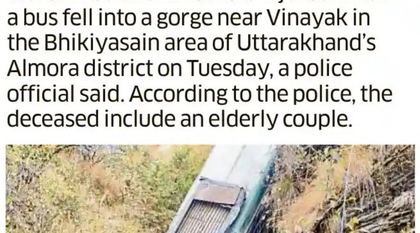
The defence ministry on Tuesday signed contracts worth Rs 4,666 crore to procure 4.25 lakh close quarter battle carbines and 48 heavy torpedoes. Indian Navy's Kalvari class submarines are set to receive the heavy weight black shark torpedoes.
Details on Page 8

### ORR upgrade execution in 2 packages

The Karnataka government has approved the proposal to redevelop a 17-km stretch of the Outer Ring Road between Central Silk Board and KR Puram metro station at a total cost of Rs 450 crore with the project to be executed in two packages, official documents show.
Details on Page 3

### B'luru-M'luru Vande Bharat feasible: Vaishnaw

Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Tuesday said that completion of the electrification between Sakleshpur and Subrahmanya Road railway line



will enable operation of Vande Bharat Express train. "Now we will be able to run electric superfast train services including Vande Bharat train through this route," Vaishnaw said in a statement.
Details on Page 5

### Social media platforms warned over content

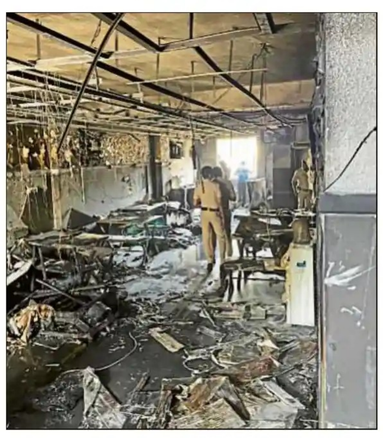
Asking social media platforms to act against obscene and unlawful content, the Centre has warned them of action if they fail to follow the directions. In an advisory dated December 29, 2025, the Ministry of Electronics and IT (Meity) asked social media firms the need for greater consistency in identifying and removing unlawful content.
Details on Page 8

### Bus falls into Uttarakhand gorge, 7 killed

Seven people, including three women, were killed and 12 others injured when a bus fell into a gorge near Vinayak in the Bhikiyasain area of Uttarakhand's Almora district on Tuesday, a police official said. According to the police, the deceased include an elderly couple.

**UNSAFE**

# Tragedy-hit Kundalahalli PG had a pending demolition order



**On the ground floor, one room was converted into a kitchen space and also had a stove, along with a cylinder placed outside.** DH PHOTO/ASRA MAVAD

**ASRA MAVAD**
BENGALURU, DHNS

The cylinder blast incident at a Paying Guest (PG) accommodation in Kundalahalli, which claimed the life of one and left three injured, could have been avoided, claim Brookfield residents, because the building had a demolition order pending since 2023.

Residents of Brookfield have been protesting against the 7 Hills Sai Co-Living PG, located near Ryan International School, ever since the building's construction began in 2020, they told *DH*.

"It's a 1,200 sq ft space, and they've built a ground plus six-floor building, with no setbacks and zero regard for fire safety," a resident, who has been living in the neighbourhood for about 18 years, told *DH* when this reporter visited the spot. "It was a disaster waiting to happen, and the BBMP authorities were aware of it and rightly issued a demolition order. But since the owner has approached the court against it, it was stayed."

> It's a 1,200 sq ft space, and they've built a ground plus six-floor building, with no setbacks and zero regard for fire safety. It was a disaster waiting to happen, and the BBMP authorities were aware of it and rightly issued a demolition order. But since the owner has approached the court against it, it was stayed
>
> **- A resident**

The recent fire is likely to have caused damage to the neighbouring buildings because the PG stands sandwiched between another PG and a private residence.

The demolition order issued by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) stated that the building owner, Vishnuvardhan Reddy, had not obtained a sanctioned plan from the BBMP for the construction of the multi-storied building.

It also noted that the owner had not replied to the Provisional Order and had also failed to remove the unauthorised portion of the building.

Prior to this, authorities had also ordered a stay on the construction, which was then supposed to be a ground-floor plus five-storey building.

▸ Kundalahalli, Page 5

# Kundanahalli PG cylinder explosion: Kurnool techie battles for life

## One dead; three injured undergoing treatment in ICU

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

Twenty-eight-year-old Venkatesh from Kurnool, a tech professional who began working recently, was eagerly expecting his first salary.

But tragedy struck on Monday in the form of an LPG cylinder blast at Seven Hills Sai Co-Living PG in Kundanahalli, which left Venkatesh critically injured. He is currently getting treated at Whitefield's Brookfield Hospital with more than 90% burns.

The family of Venkatesh's friend told *DH* that his chances of survival remain slim.

However, his father, who is unaware of the severity of his condition, said he plans to take Venkatesh to Hyderabad in two days for further treatment.

"It is difficult for us here because I cannot understand Kannada, Hindi or English," he said. Back home, Venkatesh's mother has no clue about what is happening to her family.

His friend's family said the three boys — Venkatesh, Aravind, who died, and their brother — were heading out for dinner when one returned to the washroom and the other two were engulfed by the fire. All three were roommates on the sixth floor.

Speaking to *DH*, Dr Sangeetha Pradeep, director of the hospital, said: "Two males and one female patient were brought in yesterday around 7.30 pm. Shivi Goel and Vishal Verma have sustained about 20 to 25% injuries around their neck, hands and legs. It is a long road to recovery, provided no infections are contracted."

Two other injured are also receiving treatment in the ICU.

Verma joined an IT firm in July and works as a data entry operator, while Shivi works for an NGO.

Dr Savitha, Health Officer, East City Corporation, Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), told *DH*: "People who live on the second and third floors of the building are safe, but these three people got injured.

"We will inspect the PG where the incident occurred and all other PGs in the vicinity for violations, if any. We were in the hospital till 2.30 am and are constantly in touch with the doctor to monitor their conditions," she said.

Brookfield Hospital, Whitefield, where victims of the blast are being treated. DH PHOTO/AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR

## PG owner, caretaker booked for culpable homicide: DCP

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** HAL police under the Whitefield division have registered an FIR against two persons after a cylinder explosion in a PG on Monday killed one and injured three others, officials said.

K Parashurama, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Whitefield), confirmed to *DH* that the case was registered under the BNS section related to culpable homicide not amounting to murder against Vishnu, the building owner and a native of Andhra Pradesh, and Roja, who was locally maintaining Seven Hills Sai Co-Living PG near Kundalahalli.

Around 6.15 pm on Monday, fire and smoke were detected in the G+6 building housing the PG. According to police, the fire broke out after a commercial Bharat Gas cylinder exploded.

The fire led to the death of Aravind (23) from Ballari, who was working as a senior analyst at a firm in Bengaluru. The injured are Venkatesh, 28, from Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh, and Vishal Verma, 23, and Shivi Goel, 25, both from Uttarakhand.

Venkatesh remains on ventilator support with severe burns, while the others are recovering, police sources said.

"Preliminary probe revealed that the gas leak was observed around 2 pm and was neglected. There was also no proper ventilation. Two commercial cylinders and one domestic cylinder were found at the spot," a senior officer told *DH*.

## Jayanagar resident bitten by strays on morning walk

BENGALURU, DHNS

A resident of Jayanagar was bitten by seven stray dogs during his morning walk on Monday.

Terming the incident harrowing, BR Nagaraj, former director at Google India, told *DH* that he was attacked while walking alone to his yoga class.

"I do not know what instigated the dogs. They suddenly attacked me and I fell to the ground," he said.

Nagaraj sustained bite injuries to the calf muscles of his right leg and tissue injuries to his left shoulder.

He was immediately admitted to a nearby private hospital, where he was administered anti-rabies and tetanus (TETVAC) injections. "I was given six injections around the bite wounds and still have about four doses left," he said.

The victim has also lodged a complaint with the police regarding the stray dog menace. "It is very difficult for elderly people to walk by themselves because of the stray dog problem. I urge the authorities to take action," Nagaraj said.

## Biocon employee falls to death; suicide suspected

BENGALURU, DHNS

A 26-year-old employee of Biocon died after falling from the company's building in Bengaluru on Tuesday. Police suspect the death to be a case of suicide.

The deceased has been identified as S Anantha Kumar, a resident of Banashankari, who worked in the finance department at Biocon's Electronics City Phase II facility, police said.

According to preliminary information, Kumar was speaking on his phone and later went to the canteen terrace, from where he allegedly fell. The incident occurred around 5 pm.

Police said the body was shifted to a hospital in Electronics City. No death note was recovered, and the reason for the suspected suicide is yet to be ascertained. His parents have been informed, and a case will be registered after their statement is recorded.

Further investigation by the jurisdictional Parappana Agrahara police is under way.

In a statement, the company said: "We are deeply saddened by the passing of one of our employees in Bengaluru. Our thoughts and heartfelt condolences are with the family during this extremely difficult time. As the matter is currently under investigation by the authorities, we are unable to share further details at this stage."

## Cop booked for dowry harassment

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** A police inspector attached to the Sadashivanagar police station has been booked for dowry harassment and subjecting his wife to cruelty.

The FIR was registered by the North Women Police Station on December 16 against Girish BP under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) sections 85 (husband or relative of husband of a woman subjecting her to cruelty), 351 (criminal intimidation), and 352 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace), and relevant sections of the Dowry Prohibition Act, following a complaint by his wife.

The complainant has alleged that she married Girish in 2010 and had two children. However, since 2017, Girish has been subjecting the victim and her children to mental and physical harassment and has been demanding dowry, the FIR noted.

She also alleged that in August this year, he physically attacked their daughter with a cricket bat, causing serious concern for her safety. In addition, she claimed that she had transferred Rs 8 lakh from her father's bank account and issued a cheque for Rs 10 lakh in favour of Girish. The authorities have confirmed that further probe is underway.

## Chitra Santhe returns on Jan 4 with focus on environment

BENGALURU, DHNS

The 23rd edition of Chitra Santhe will be held at the Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath in Bengaluru on January 4.

The edition will focus on the theme 'Environmental Challenges' and will be inaugurated by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

Organisers received 3,314 applications from 22 states and four Union Territories, including Punjab, Meghalaya, Tripura, Assam and Uttarakhand. Of these, 1,530 artists will participate, including one from Dubai.

The Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) will operate feeder bus services from Mantri Mall in Malleswaram, and the Majestic and Shivajinagar metro stations.

Four buggies will also be available to assist senior citizens and Persons with Disability (PWDs).

### Nature on canvas

As part of Chitra Santhe, a nature-based thematic art exhibition will be on display across four galleries of the Chitrakala Parishath from January 4 to 12. The exhibition will explore Bengaluru's ecological present and future and is a joint initiative of the Parishath and the Vanaloka Foundation.

Preparations underway at Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath for the 23rd Chitra Santhe on January 4, with 1,530 artists from across India and one from Dubai set to participate. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

## Enhanced security in CBD for New Year's Eve bash

### Public urged to avoid these stretches on Dec 31 night

BENGALURU, DHNS

Bengaluru police on Tuesday said elaborate security measures have been put in place in the Central Business District (CBD) ahead of the New Year celebrations on Wednesday night.

In a statement, Joint Commissioner of Police (West) C Vamsi Krishna said comprehensive arrangements have been made on MG Road, Brigade Road, Church Street and adjoining areas.

The public has been advised to avoid these stretches on the night of December 31 due to expected heavy crowding.

Brigade Road decked up with festive lighting ahead of the NYE celebrations. DH PHOTOS/MS MANJUNATH

### KEY POINTS

- **Pedestrian-only zones:** MG Road (Anil Kumble Circle–Mayo Hall), Brigade Road, Church Street and Museum Road from 8 pm on December 31 to 1 am on January 1. Re-entry into Brigade Road after exit will not be permitted.
- **Crowd regulation:** Staggered entry on Brigade Road and Church Street; no stationary crowding allowed; continuous movement mandatory. Kamaraj Road will be closed towards Cauvery Emporium.
- **Prohibited items:** Bags and sharp objects banned; frisking at Anil Kumble Circle, Cauvery Junction, and Church Street.
- **Metro & transport:** MG Road metro station to close at 10 pm; Cubbon Park and Trinity stations to remain open. Metro frequency increased from 10 to 8 minutes, with two additional empty trains after midnight.
- **Parking:** Shivajinagar BMTC complex, UB City (1st floor), Garuda Mall and Kamaraj Road.
- **Cab/auto pick-up & drop:** Cubbon Road (BRV Junction), Queens Road–CTO Junction, Raj Bhavan Road–CTO Junction, Cubbon Park metro station and Trinity Circle.

Police officers create awareness among the public as a precautionary measure to prevent untoward incidents.

- **BMTC services:** Special night services from Anil Kumble Circle, Mayo Hall, Trinity and other key points to major destinations.

## KIA posts 5,904 metric tonnes of coriander trade this season

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) has posted 13% rise in coriander trade this season.

During the June-November 2025 season, the airport handled 5,904 metric tonnes of coriander, a 13% increase year-on-year.

This season saw movement across 22 domestic destinations, with notable growth in shipments from northern and central markets. Lucknow, Varanasi, and Jaipur, in particular, recorded a significant volume increase, the airport stated.

Kolkata accounted for the highest share of coriander traffic, followed by Delhi, Bagdogra, Ranchi, and Patna, it stated.

The airport also facilitated movement to five more domestic destinations — Agartala, Agra, Nagpur, Amritsar, and Port Blair.

"The season's agri-cargo volumes reflect evolving demand patterns and expanding domestic linkages, while reinforcing BLR Airport's role in facilitating efficient, scalable agri-cargo operations to support India's growing agricultural trade," the statement said.

Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport. DH FILE

## 6 arrested for assaulting man; attack stems from personal rivalry

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** The CK Achukattu police have arrested six people for allegedly assaulting a man, officials said on Tuesday.

The arrested are Venkatesh, Chandan, Mohan, Soori, Giri and Ganesh, police said.

### More arrests expected

"Venkatesh and Chandan are rowdy sheeters. A few other suspects are yet to be arrested," a police officer said.

The incident occurred on Sunday around 8.30 pm, when about 10 people arrived in a car and on motorcycles and attacked the victim, who was seated inside his car.

CCTV footage of the incident went viral.

"The victim and the suspects had previously filed cases and counter cases against each other. The attack stemmed from personal rivalry," the officer said.

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## Tropical NYE at King's Club

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** King's Club in Nagarabhavi has curated a tropical-themed New Year's Eve celebration, promising a vibrant and high-energy start to 2026.

Spread across the club's expansive venues, the event will feature multi-floor entertainment, with DJs playing popular tracks simultaneously on each floor, offering guests a choice of music. An open sky deck with a dedicated entertainment line-up adds to the festive experience.

*Deccan Herald* and *Prajavani* are the print media partners.

Tropical NYE 2026 begins at 7.30 pm on Wednesday. The evening includes an unlimited buffet with over 40 items, along with a selection of alcoholic beverages and soft drinks.

King's Club, located at 15/2, Muddanapalya, Sir M Visvesvaraya Layout, 8th Block, has also set up a dedicated play and entertainment zone for children.

GRIDLOCK & NEGLECT

## No exit in sight: Veerannapalya turns into 'Super Mario' obstacle course

ASHWIN BM
BENGALURU, DHNS

While the glossy glass facades of Embassy Manyata Business Park reflect Bengaluru's technological prowess, just across the Outer Ring Road, residents of Veerannapalya are living a crumbling reality.

With a six-month road closure, rampant illegal construction and mounting garbage, the locality has become a case study in urban administrative failure.

The arterial Veerannapalya Main Road, a key link between the Outer Ring Road and RT Nagar, has been dug up for pipeline work for over half a year.

What was meant to be a temporary inconvenience has turned into a near permanent blockade, effectively landlocking thousands of residents living in over 17 apartment complexes.

"Reaching home is like playing a game of Super Mario," said a local resident. "You have to navigate swerves, pits, jumps and sudden turns. Every day, our residents' WhatsApp groups are flooded with one question: 'Which way can I get home today?'"

The crisis has been compounded by the demolition of two flyover ramps at Hebbal and Veerannapalya several years ago, reportedly to facilitate smoother access to the tech park, leaving local entry and exit points in disarray.

With slip roads shut, residents approaching from the Hennur side are forced to travel an additional 8 to 10 km to Hebbal or Thanisandra simply to make a U turn.

Neglect leaves Veerannapalya Main Road in a dire state.

Prolonged pipe-laying work leaves Veerannapalya Main Road dug up for over six months. DH PHOTOS/ASHWIN BM

A transportation planner who has lived in the area for decades said the problem reflects a collapse of discharge capacity at junctions. "By forcing all traffic onto the flyovers and closing service road access, they have created a system where idling engines spew pollution for hours. It is a loss of man hours and a failure of basic engineering logic," she said, requesting anonymity.

She said reopening blocked service road access, installing a synchronised signal at the Veerannapalya junction, and creating a median opening under the flyover could ease congestion.

The neglect extends beyond roads. Sandwiched between commercial hubs, the neighbourhood now resembles a landfill, with uncollected waste from illegal buildings and paying guest accommodations lining the streets.

"Veerannapalya Main Road has become a dumpyard for everything from kitchen waste to abandoned vehicles and animal carcasses," another resident said.

Residents allege that poor lighting, limited CCTV coverage, and antisocial activity have led to rising safety concerns.

Despite repeated representations to local MLA KJ George and MP PC Mohan, residents say the response has been disheartening. "We are taxpaying citizens asking for basic roads and safety, but officials seem to prioritise only the tech park's interests," a residents' welfare association member said.

### Urgent demands

- Immediate repair of roads
- Traffic relief measures
- Sanitation drive to clear garbage dump sites
- Action against illegal paying guest facilities and vehicle dumping
- Public safety measures, including CCTV coverage and stray dog management

## IN THE CITY

### GENERAL

**Book release:** Mallepuram G Venkatesh and HK Lakshminarayana Adiga; Karnataka Kannada Writers and Publishers Association; BM Sri Pratishthana, NR Colony; 11 am.

**Review of Kuvempu's 'Malenadina Madumagalu':** Lecture by KY Narayanaswamy; Kannada Book Authority; New Academic Block, Seminar Hall, 6th Floor, Dr Manmohan Singh Bangalore City University, Central College Campus; 11 am.

### CULTURAL

**Carnatic classical concert:** Vocals by Sankaran Namboothiri and team; Surabharathi, HRBR Layout; 6.30 pm.

### CITY WEATHER

**FORECAST**
Generally cloudy sky with light rain

**TEMPERATURES**

| | |
|---|---|
| Maximum | 28.0°C |
| Minimum | 18.0°C |
| Rainfall (as of 8:30 am) | -- |
| Humidity (as of 5:30 pm) | 64% |
| Sunset (Dec 31) | 6:03 pm |
| Sunrise (Jan 1) | 6:41 am |
| Moonrise | 2:00 pm |
| Moonset | 2:08 am |

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

Invites to be published in thiscolumn should be sent to: **incitytoday@deccanherald.co.in.**
Please note that hard copieswill not be accepted

## 18,496 voters in B'luru teachers' constituency rolls

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** A total of 18,496 voters are eligible to cast their ballots in the upcoming Bengaluru Teachers' Constituency elections to the Council.

Briefing reporters, M Maheshwar Rao, Chief Commissioner of GBA and District Election Officer, said the final electoral roll has been prepared.

The draft electoral roll was published on Nov 25. After scrutiny of claims and objections, the final electoral rolls for the 28 Assembly constituencies under GBA's jurisdiction were published on Tuesday.

Accordingly, Rao said the final electoral roll for the segment has 18,496 voters.

R Ramachandran, special commissioner (elections), said eligible teachers left out during final revision can apply for inclusion up to last date for filing nominations.

# Rs 450-cr ORR redevelopment in 2 packages; govt to fund 50%

### B'luru East & South Municipal Corpns to share balance

**NAVEEN MENEZES**
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka government has approved a proposal to redevelop a 17-km stretch of the Outer Ring Road (ORR) between Silk Board Junction and the KR Puram metro station at an estimated cost of Rs 450 crore.

The project will be executed in two packages, with the state government bearing 50% of the cost and the remainder to be shared by the Bengaluru East and South City Municipal Corporations, official documents show.

As per a government order (GO) issued recently, the tech corridor has been split into Package 1 — the 5.44-km Silk Board–Iblur Junction stretch at a cost of Rs 143 crore — and Package 2, covering the 11.57-km Iblur Junction–KR Puram section at Rs 307 crore.

The Silk Board–KR Puram stretch is among Bengaluru's most heavily congested corridors, serving multiple IT hubs and metro stations.

Beyond routine resurfacing, the GO states that the creation of a bus priority lane will be part of the project scope. Officials clarified that bollards will not be installed continuously; instead, demarcation will be achieved through "digital fencing, bollards at strategic locations, and road markings".

A view of the Silk Board corridor, one of Bengaluru's busiest stretches linking major IT hubs and metro stations. DH FILE PHOTO

Proposed works include reconstruction of footpaths, creation of cycle lanes, white-topping at junctions, installation of vertical gratings to mitigate flooding in low-lying areas, overhead gantries and signage, deployment of advanced traffic-management technologies, utility ducts, and beautification.

Development of roads connected to the ORR also forms part of the plan.

The proposal was cleared by a technical expert committee comprising domain specialists, the document notes. The committee recommended the use of technologies such as stamped concrete layers, cold plastic paint, and glass grids.

The project will be implemented through Bengaluru Smart Infrastructure Ltd (B-SMILE SPV).

A senior B-SMILE official said tenders are expected to be floated in the first week of the new year. Another official said members of the Outer Ring Road Companies Association (ORRCA) would be involved during the execution phase to ensure better quality.

However, officials noted that large portions of the ORR service roads were recently asphalted by the municipal corporations, raising concerns over possible duplication of work. The scope of the project also does not include development of spaces beneath flyovers, it is learnt.

## Kogilu eviction puts spotlight on B'luru's housing policy

**NAVEEN MENEZES**
BENGALURU, DHNS

Human rights activists, including civic leaders, backed the state government's decision to provide alternative housing to displaced families, stating that the government should ensure similar facilities are extended to all homeless people.

Pointing out that Bengaluru does not have an adequate number of housing facilities, they also called on the government to promote large-scale rental housing complexes to support migrant populations who lack resources to immediately purchase homes.

Narasimha Murthy, who has been actively engaged in social issues in the city, said the government must provide basic amenities, including shelter, to citizens, which is also a right guaranteed under the Constitution.

"In the case of Kogilu Layout, the demolition was carried out without providing alternatives," he said, adding that the government is also within its rights to evict families if they refuse to accept alternative housing.

Advocate Vinay Sreenivasa said the Kogilu incident shows Bengaluru's acute housing crisis. "It's the duty of the government to ensure the citizens including migrants have a decent place to live. In Bengaluru, the situation is so bad that people in slums bathe in the open. There are cases where they pay neighbours to charge their phones because there is no electricity connection," he said, adding it's the migrants which are keeping the city clean and doing work that rich folks won't.

These responses come at a time when questions are being raised over the allotment of sites to affected families as a special gesture, with the opposition BJP terming it an attempt to appease minorities.

BJP leader Padmanabha Reddy said the government did not show similar concern while evicting hundreds of families in KG Halli, who predominantly belonged to SC/ST communities. Similarly, around 150 families residing in Janaki Ram Layout near Banaswadi have also received demolition notices to make way for a railway project. "The government must extend humanitarian gestures to all displaced families, especially those who have been residing in Bengaluru for several decades," he said.

An official from the Rajiv Gandhi Housing Corporation said the agency has about 64 housing projects in Bengaluru, comprising a total of 45,000 one-BHK flats. "As many as 7,890 flats are ready for occupation, but we are not seeing buyers in large numbers," he said, adding that demand was also not particularly weak.

Both the Housing Corporation and the Karnataka Slum Development Board build compact flats for economically weaker sections. These are offered at a subsidised cost of Rs 11.2 lakh, but the flats measure just 365 sq ft. Some of the apartment complexes rise to 20 floors, making them unattractive due to frequent lift breakdowns.

Urbanist Ashwin Mahesh suggested the government should consider setting aside 30% of housing projects — including those developed by Karnataka Housing Board and Bangalore Development Authority — for group rental complexes.

"We are seeing individual homeowners converting their properties into rentals. This does not solve the problem at scale. The government must designate certain pockets exclusively for rentals. This will encourage renting, as home ownership is becoming unaffordable," he said, adding the Kogilu issue reflects city's broader housing shortage.

## CM, DKS under pressure to allot homes to encroachers from Kerala: BYV

**BELAGAVI, DHNS:** Karnataka BJP president B Y Vijayendra on Tuesday alleged that AICC general secretary K C Venugopal was exerting pressure on both Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM D K Shivakumar to allot houses, which should rightfully be handed over to Kannadigas, to people from Kerala, the illegal homes of whom were demolished in Kogilu Layout in Bengaluru.

Vijayendra, interacting with journalists in Belagavi, said that the BJP would not allow Kannadigas' interests to be trampled upon. "At the core committee meeting of our party scheduled on January 5, we will discuss the Congress government's attempts to allot houses to encroachers from Kerala, besides deliberating on the problem of drug trafficking in the state, and unpaid dues to the tune of Rs 5,000 crore to beneficiaries of the Gruha Lakshmi scheme," said the Karnataka BJP chief.

Vijayendra further alleged that Shivakumar had changed tack on the demolition of illegal buildings following Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan's condemnation of the state government's actions. "Both Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar are trying to save their chairs, and along with Housing Minister B Z Zameer Ahmed Khan, are sacrificing the interests of Kannadigas," added Vijayendra.

The state BJP chief pointed to Siddaramaiah's decisions to compensate victims of natural tragedies in neighbouring Kerala, which contrasted with the state government's failure to ensure the rehabilitation of flood victims in Karnataka.

**B Y VIJAYENDRA**
Karnataka BJP president

"Both Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar are trying to save their chairs, and along with Housing Minister B Z Zameer Ahmed Khan, are sacrificing the interests of Kannadigas.

# 'No money for photocopies of papers, how can we pay Rs 2.5 lakh?'

### On hand-to-mouth existence, families want their share for flats waived

**SNEHA RAMESH**
BENGALURU, DHNS

The government, on Tuesday, started checking records of displaced families at Kogilu to ascertain their eligibility for allotment of flats.

Though the government has said that the flats for those evicted from Kogilu will be allotted at subsidised rates and eligible allottees will have to pay only close to Rs 2.5 lakh, the families displaced said that it was impossible for them to pay up that much, even with a loan.

The families here hardly earn Rs 100-Rs 300 a day and this is not sufficient to run the household, they said.

The situation is so bad that residents had to borrow money to even get photocopies of their documents to submit to the government, one of the residents said.

Construction debris strewn across the demolition site near Kogilu in Yelahanka, Bengaluru. DH FILE PHOTO

"Multiple sets of photocopies (xerox copies) of documents have cost many families Rs 500-Rs 600 and have borrowed money to get this done. Given this situation, it is impossible for any of us to pay that much," said Jabeena, a resident of Kogilu since 2001.

Yet another resident said hey hardly had money to meet health expenses.

"We are a family of six members and my husband is the only earning person. He is a auto driver and we have three children. His earnings are barely enough for us to run the household. If kids fall ill, we cannot even afford to go to a doctor," said Shabana, a evicted resident.

Many of them said they cannot imagine earning so much money in their lifetime and urged the government to waive the payment.

"Many here beg on the streets for a living and there are people who hardly earn Rs 100 a day. The Rs 2.5 lakh is something we have never seen in our lives," yet another resident said.

"The government has been kind to allot houses for us. We request that it waive that money as well, so that we can live peacefully," a localite said.

## Kerala CM shouldn't poke his nose in our affairs: HM

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** The government has decided to provide alternative housing to families evicted from Kogilu Layout, Home Minister G Parameshwara said on Tuesday, asserting that the move was aimed at resolving hardships faced by affected residents and not driven by political motives.

Parameshwara told reporters that the government was focused on rehabilitation and welfare. "We are trying to solve the problems faced by these families. Governments have taken similar initiatives to rehabilitate displaced families in the past too," he said.

Responding sharply to comments made by Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on the eviction drive, Parameshwara said leaders from neighbouring states should refrain from interfering in Karnataka's internal matters.

"The Kerala chief minister should not poke his nose into the affairs of Karnataka. Do we interfere when Kerala faces issues?" he said.

On concerns raised about the presence of Bangladeshi nationals among displaced families, the home mnister said the government would conduct an investigation.

"The central government can also verify," he said.

**G PARAMESHWARA**
Home Minister

"Leaders from neighbouring states should refrain from interfering in Karnataka's internal matters.

# Verify nationality of people evicted in Kogilu, demands BJP

BENGALURU, DHNS

Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Assembly R Ashoka on Tuesday called on the state government to ascertain whether those, the illegal homes of whom were razed in Kogilu Layout in North Bengaluru, were Indian citizens.

Interacting with reporters in Bengaluru, Ashoka said that anyone who occupies land illegally had to be evicted. "The government must order a probe by IAS-ranked officials and verify whether those who lost homes were Kannadigas. Are they foreigners? Unless these facts are ascertained, no home must be allotted to them," said Ashoka.

Holding up two maps – one from 2023 and the other from 2025 – Ashoka said that houses had been built in the area only in the past six months. The LoP opined that the government's decision to allot homes to encroachers would set a bad precedent. "This will encourage the land mafia," said Ashoka.

Ashoka

Responding to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's assertion that homes were being given on 'humanitarian grounds', Ashoka pointed to eviction drives carried out at 40 other sites. "Will houses be allotted to those whose houses were destroyed at other sites too," said Ashoka, adding that the government must not rehabilitate those who had lost homes that had been built without authorisation.

Citing the government's reply provided in the Legislative Council during the Winter Session, Ashoka said, "There are 37.48 lakh people in the state who have no houses (17.31 lakh have no sites, while 20.17 lakh don't have houses)."

The Congress high command and the government in Kerala were exerting pressure on the state government to rehabilitate the families rendered homeless following the eviction drive in Kogilu, said Ashoka.

"If the government goes ahead with this, state-owned land will be swallowed. Don't do this; don't yield to political pressure," said Ashoka, adding that a legal team from the BJP would file a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) on this issue.

Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje echoed Ashoka's demand for verifying the nationality of those whose homes were demolished.

"Karnataka police must visit West Bengal, and verify whether those evicted in Kogilu were indeed Indian citizens. Illegal decisions are being taken in Karnataka. I feel there should be an SIR exercise in Karnataka too. Let the truth about those who are immigrants come out," she said.

## Not gifting anything to encroachers, says DCM

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** Noting that encroachments were not acceptable in the wake of demolitions at Kogilu, Deputy CM D K Shivakumar on Tuesday said there was no question of gifting anything to encroachers.

He told reporters, "There is no appeasement politics. We will take action against those who facilitated encroachment. We will give housing through Pradhan Mantri Awas scheme to eligible evictees".

Asked if all evictees would get accommodation, he said, "We will rehabilitate only genuine evictees. We are not regularizing it".

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For M/s. SRI LAKSHMI SRINIVASA RICE MILL
Sanjay H. Sethiya, *Advocate*, Law Square, *Advocates & Solicitors*,
Level Two, No.2/1, 3rd Cross, Gandhinagar, Bengaluru–560 009

26-12-2025

# New Year fete: '108' ambulances on high alert tonight

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** The state government's 108 Arogya Kavacha ambulances have been prepared and deployed across the state to prevent loss of life due to road accidents that might occur during New Year celebrations.

According to a health department communication, an average increase of 30% to 35% in accident cases has been reported during New Year celebrations, prompting the department to take precautionary measures.

The ambulance services will work in close coordination with the police department, and additional ambulances will be deployed in areas where it is anticipating a higher number of accidents.

### Equipped in advance

To ensure uninterrupted services, weekly off days of ambulance staff have been cancelled, and all ambulances have been equipped in advance with sufficient fuel, oxygen, and necessary medical equipment.

In the city, 72 ambulances have been deployed along with trained and specialised staff. In case of emergencies, the public can dial the toll-free number '108'.

Regional manager of Arogya Kavacha Yatheesh N said, "Each ambulance will have a pilot and an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). Fifty three ambulances will be active in public places and on roads during the night."

The availability of ambulances has been ensured to safely transport patients suffering from life-threatening injuries.

Information regarding major accidents and casualties will be shared with the police, fire and emergency services and the health department.

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## MLC polls: Cong names 4 candidates

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** The Congress on Tuesday announced candidates for elections to four Legislative Council seats scheduled in November next year.

The party has nominated Mohan Limbikai for the West Graduates' constituency and Shashi Hulikuntemutt for the South East Graduates' seat.

Sharanappa Mattur has been fielded from the North East Teachers' constituency. Puttanna, the sitting MLC representing Bangalore Teachers' segment, has been renominated as the party's candidate.

## No new case against Deve Gowda, says NICE

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** The Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprises (NICE), the promoter of the Bengaluru-Mysuru Infrastructure Corridor (BMIC) project, has said that no new writ petition has been filed by the state government or the company against former prime minister H D Deve Gowda.

NICE said this in response to Gowda's statement earlier this week that he had been made party to a Supreme Court writ petition in connection with the BMIC project.

"The claim that (Gowda) is being 'forced at this age' into litigation is factually incorrect and misleading," NICE said in a statement. "Neither NICE Ltd nor the government has instituted any fresh proceedings against him or against farmers".

According to NICE, all matters currently pending before the Supreme Court "originate from proceedings initiated between 2009 and 2012 triggered by Deve Gowda's own interventions and public statements".

Gowda was not originally a party to the proceedings related to BMIC project, NICE said.

"In Jan 2009, while a writ petition filed by NICE Ltd challenging an altered road alignment was pending before the Karnataka High Court, Gowda personally circulated a letter and a publication to the court, despite not being a litigant in the case," it said.

"The high court treated this act as interference in judicial proceedings and converted the letter into a public interest litigation (PIL), thereby making Gowda a party respondent," NICE said.

NICE said it subsequently challenged the HC orders before the SC.

"The Supreme Court granted interim stay on all further proceedings, issued notices to Gowda and others, and the matter has remained pending since then. The case is now listed for final hearing on Jan 21, 2026," it said.

# KSEAB extends digital exam option to II PU students too

### Can use comp/laptop or pen-&-paper with scribe mode

BENGALURU, DHNS

For the first time, the Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board (KSEAB) has allowed visually challenged II PU students to write the exams using computer or laptop.

This facility was provided to SSLC students last year and over 25 students utlised it. Extending the same to II PU exams from this year, the Board said in an official circular that students are now allowed to bring their own laptops.

As mentioned in the circular, there will be a reader-cum-scribe, who will read out the questions.

Instead of scribe writing in pen-and-paper mode, candidates themselves will type the answers using digital equipment.

"The option is left to candidates. If they wish to go with the earlier scribe mode, they can do so," said Gopalakrishna H N, director of KSEAB (exams).

The Board said it was emulating in this regard the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), which is providing digital exam facility for visually challenged students from the 2023-24 academic year.

Students who wish to write exams digitally have been asked to register separately with the respective school/college.

Before allowing students to start writing, it is mandatory for them to get their digital equipment checked by the centre head and ensure it is completely formatted and no internet is connected to it.

The KSEAB has specified that only Windows 10/11 software, MS Office, Multilingual Nudi 6.5, Math cad and other NAB (National Association for the Blind)-approved software should be installed on the computer/laptop to write the exam.

For any technical errors, the Board or the centre will not be responsible, it has clarified.

During last year's II PU exams, 264 visually challenged students appeared.

### How does it work?

A reader-cum-scribe will read out questions from the paper and the student has to type the answer on the computer.

If the student finds it difficult to type, the reader-cum-scribe can write answers dictated by the student.

After the exam, the student should take a printout of the typed answers and submit it to the superintendent of the examination centre. The superintendent should ensure that the printout is taken at the examination centre itself.

## Illegal betting case: Cong MLA Veerendra Puppy granted bail

BENGALURU, DHNS

A Bengaluru court on Tuesday granted bail to Congress MLA K C Veerendra Puppy in connection with a case involving illegal online and offline betting.

Veerendra was in judicial custody after his arrest by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) earlier this year. He was also interrogated by the ED before being remanded to judicial custody.

The conditions imposed by the court while granting bail are yet to be clear and an order is awaited.

On August 23, ED investigators arrested Veerendra, the legislator from Chitradurga, in Gangtok, Sikkim.

The arrest followed ED's large-scale raids the previous day at 31 locations in different parts of India, including Gangtok, Chitradurga district, Bengaluru, Hubballi, Jodhpur and Mumbai, linked to MLA and his associates.

In Goa, the raids focused on Puppy's Casino Gold, Ocean Rivers Casino, Puppy's Casino Pride, Ocean 7 Casino and Big Daddy Casino.

ED had recovered Rs 12 crore in cash, including Rs one crore in foreign currency: bundles of 100 US Dollars, 10 and 20 British pounds, 500 Dirhams and 100 and 50 Euro currency notes. ED has claimed that searches indicated a complex layering of cash and other funds.

Veerendra Puppy

"Search has revealed that the accused is running several online betting sites in the name of King567, Raja567, etc. Further, K C Thippeswamy, the brother of the accused, is operating three business entities from Dubai, viz, Diamond Softech, TRS Technologies, and Prime9Technologies, related to the call centre services and gaming business of K C Veerendra Puppy," the ED had said in an official statement following the MLA's arrest.

The ED investigators also recovered gold jewellery worth Rs 6 crore, silver articles weighing approximately 10 kg. Four vehicles were also impounded under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.

"Further, 17 bank accounts and two bank lockers were also frozen. Many properties related documents were also seized from the premises of the brother, K C Nagaraj and his son, Pruthvi N Raj. Several incriminating documents were also seized from several premises.

His other associates, namely brother K C Thippeswamy and Pruthvi N Raj, are handling operations of online gaming from Dubai.

Further, it was revealed that K C Veerendra, along with his associates, had travelled to Gangtok via Bagdogra on a business visit to lease a land casino," the ED said.

## Will talk in 2026, says DKS on becoming CM

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Tuesday indicated that his chief ministerial hopes were alive. Asked if he would become the CM in 2026, Shivakumar said, "We'll talk about it in 2026."

Shivakumar said his resolution was to provide good governance in the new year.

"I pray that the state receives good rains next year, too, like this year. Our guarantee schemes will continue to empower people. Local body elections will also be held next year," he said.

Asked if good governance will be under his leadership, Shivakumar said, "Good governance will continue under the Congress government."

He added that Congress' good governance will continue for "another 7.5 years", a reference to his belief that his party would win the 2028 elections, too.

## Nagarahole Adivasis to hold protest meet on Jan 2

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** Adivasis of Nagarahole villages will hold a meeting on Jan 2 to demand answers from the government and forest department over their forced dislocation from the forests.

The meeting at Nagarahole's Udburu Gate comes at the end of the 15-day padayatra through 29 villages, during which leaders of Adivasi communities reached out to people there to create awareness on the importance of getting their rights to ancestral lands.

The gram sabhas have demanded that during the Jan 2 protest, the DCs of Kodagu and Mysuru districts, as well as the state chief secretary, also the chairperson of state-level monitoring committee on forest rights, respond to questions raised by adivasis on historical injustice in Nagarahole.

## Lokayukta police arrest SPP for bribery

**KALABURAGI, DHNS:** The Lokayukta police, on Tuesday, arrested special public prosecutor Rajamahendra G of the second principal district judge's court while receiving a bribe of Rs 25,000.

### Caste abuse case

He had been arguing a caste abuse case filed by Naveen Ananthayya, who hailed from Kandanuli village in Vikarabad district of Telangana state.

The accused had reportedly demanded a bribe of Rs 50,000 from Naveen to argue the case more effectively.

He had already received Rs 20,000 from him.

The litigant filed the complaint with the Lokayukta police when the accused started harassing him to pay the remaining amount.

Deputy Superintendent of Police Sheelvanth had conducted the raid under the guidance of Lokayukta Superintendent Siddaraju.

## Tourist entry to Nandi Hill banned

**CHIKKABALLAPUR, DHNS:** The district administration has banned the entry of tourists to Nandi Hill from 2 pm on December 31 till 10 am on January 1, 2026.

According to the order issued by the deputy commissioner, entry of tourists has been banned to ensure law and order on the occasion of New Year celebrations.

However, visitors, who have their bookings, are allowed into the Hill.

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In loving memory of

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10-01-1943 to 20-12-2025
Vaikunta Samaraadhane 1st Jan 2026, Basveshwarnagar, Bengaluru
Smt. Rama Raj K and Family
Ph - 7975072170

18th ANNIVERSARY

M.N. JAYARAMAN
B.Com.,
Ex-MEG (Records)
S/o. Late
M. Narayanaswamy OBE
DOE: 31-12-2007
Your presence was a great pleasure, now your memory is our great treasure as you were, faithfully faithfull to every trust, Honestly Honest in every deed, Righteously Righteous and Justly Just, This is the whole of a good man's creed.
Remembered by Loving Son's

18th ANNIVERSARY

J.P. NIKITHA
DOE: 31-12-2007
Remembered by Prasanna Kumar, Nirmala, Sree Kumaran
Your presence was a great pleasure, You were very fast in everything and Just when we got it all figured out, In a heart beat it changed everything, Now the days are short & the night is long, Now we are out here all alone with only your sweet memories.

BENGALURU SOUTH CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Kudlu Division, Begur Main Road, Bommanahalli, Bengaluru–560068
No.: BSCC/EE/KD/Tend-02/2025-26 Date: 30.12.2025
INVITATION FOR TENDER (IFT)
Short Term Tender Notification (Single Cover Tender)
(Through GOK KPP Portal only)
The Executive Engineer, Kudlu Division, South Zone-2, BSCC, Bengaluru-560 068 invites tenders from eligible contractors registered in Bengaluru South City Corporation, Bengaluru or equivalent registration with KPWD / CPWD / BWSSB / MES / Railways / National Highway or any State Government Organizations for the construction of works detailed in the table below. (Standard Tender Document KW-1 & 2).

| Sl. No. | Name of the Work |
|---|---|
| 1 | Annual Maintenance of Kudlu Doddakere Lake. **Estimate amount in Lakhs: 15.00, EMD in Rs. (One Lakh to be transferred through e-Protal & remaining amount to be provided in the form of BG/DD/FDR): 37,500.00** |
| 2 | Annual Maintenance of Kudlu Chikkere Lake. **Estimate amount in Lakhs: 15.00, EMD in Rs. (One Lakh to be transferred through e-Protal & remaining amount to be provided in the form of BG/DD/FDR): 37,500.00** |
| 3 | Annual Maintenance of Amalipura Kelagina Kere. **Estimate amount in Lakhs: 8.00, EMD in Rs. (One Lakh to be transferred through e-Protal & remaining amount to be provided in the form of BG/DD/FDR): 20,000.00** |

**Calendar of Events: (1)** Tender documents can be downloaded from the KPP Portal from: **03.01.2026. (2)** Last date submission of tender documents on or before **12.01.2026 @ 4:00 p.m. (3)** Financial will be opened on the website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in in the Office of the Executive Engineer, Bommanahalli Division on **13.01.2026** after **4:30 p.m.** onwards. Further details may be obtained from the above office, during office hours or website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**
Sd/- Executive Engineer, Kudlu Division, BSCC

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3. ACCOUNTANT: Male Only- B.com With Tally And Knowledge Of PF/ESI/GST/TDS, Professional Tax Etc. With Experience.
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Mobile No: 94831 05248 / 98451 06037.

VIDYA MANDIR Public School, Amruthahalli, invites applications for the Following Position Pre-Primary coordinator, Receptionist, office admin and experienced teachers in all subjects (Near Hebbal) for Primary, Middle and High school. Contact: 9880822028/ 9448711695.

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AMB Cinemas is starting operations in Kapali Mall Bangalore we are hiring ESP's to work with us, interested people can walk in to AMB Cinemas, Kapali Mall, Gandhinagar Bangalore.
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Kushal - 8050116194

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PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that the Apartment Owners of Adonai Palms Apartment situated at Hennur Bagalur Main Road, Hiremath Layout, near BDS Garden, Narayanapura, Geddalahalli, Bengaluru – 560077, have resolved on 20.12.2025 to register Adonai Palms Apartment Owners' Co-operative Society Ltd. under the Karnataka Co-operative Societies Act, 1959.
Objections, if any, may be filed with the Assistant Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Bengaluru, within 15 days from the date of publication.
Place: Bengaluru
Date: 31st December 2025
Sd/-
Authorised Signatory

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PERSONAL
Change of Name
CHANGE OF NAME
I, RAMCHANDRA, RAMACHANDRA RAMCHANDRA D & RAMCHANDRA DHULEKAR residing at # 681, Krishnappa Layout, Subbannapalya, Benglauru-560033, declare that the above names pertain to me only. Henceforth I shall be known as RAMCHANDRA D, vide affidavit dt:30.12.2025 before notary Y.R.Chandrasekar, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, M.J. Deepa Rodrigues, Deepa Rodrigues, Deepa Pinto, M.J. Deepa Pinto, Merlyn Joan Deepa Pinto, Deepa Pinto M.J. and Deepa Merlyn Joan Rodrigues, residing at No. 26, 1st A Main, 1st Block, Jakkasandra Extension, Koramangala, Bengaluru-560034, declare that the above names pertain to me only & henceforth I shall be known as MERLYN JOAN DEEPA RODRIGUES vide affidavit dated 09-Sep-2025, before notary K.V Mani, Bengaluru.
CHANGE OF NAME
I, Anthony Peter A, residing at No.14, Sunkalfarm Hut, 2nd Cross, 2nd Main, Wilson Garden, Adugodi Post, Bengaluru-560030 have changed my name to SIDHARTH GOWDA vide affidavit dated 26.12.2025 before notary register Sl.No. 313, Vol No.3, Page No. 53, S Jayanth, Bengaluru. Henceforth I shall be called SIDHARTH GOWDA only
Lost
DOCUMENT LOST
I, K. MANJUNATH, S/o Krishna residing at # 05, 6th Cross, Near Shiva Temple, Naganathapura, Bengaluru, have lost my Original Property document page No. 4 & 5, Survey No. 56/2, Site No. 16, Reg No. 4117/1992 at Govinda Agrahara Grama, Hosur Taluk, Krishnagiri Dist. Tamilnadu. While taking Xerox. If found please contact: 8861024714

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform the general public that my client , M/s B & M WINDMERE, a Partnership Firm registered under the Indian Partnership Act, 1932, having its principal place of business at No 73/2, First floor, Chambenahalli, Dommasandra post, Sarjapura Main Road, Bangalore - 562 125, and having (PAN): AAPFB4688Q, represented by its Authorized Signatory Mr. Shravanth P, aged about 40 years, Son of Mr.Pilla Reddy K, has lost/misplaced the original title documents pertaining to its immovable properties bearing Plot No. 18, Plot No. 19, Plot No. 29 and Plot No. 30, having amalgamated BBMP Khatha No. 3052/2850/18 and BBMP PID No. 159606848, carved out of converted land comprised in Sy.No. 51 of Kasavanahalli Village, Varthur Hobli, Bengaluru East Taluk.
The lost documents are as follows:

| Document | Date | Document Details |
|---|---|---|
| Sale Deed | 29.01.1998 | Doc.No.7853/1997-98, registered at SRO Bangalore South Taluk. |
| Sale Deed | 28.01.1998 | Doc.No.7854/1997-98, registered at SRO Bangalore South Taluk. |
| Sale Deed | 29.01.1998 | Doc.No.7855/1997-98, registered at SRO Bangalore South Taluk. |
| Sale Deed | 28.01.1998 | Doc.No.7860/1997-98, registered at SRO Bangalore South Taluk. |

My client has also duly lodged a Complaint bearing E-Lost Report No.1981333/2025 dated:29/12/2025 before the HSR Police Station, Bengaluru, regarding the same. It is hereby informed to the general public that who so ever finds the above mentioned original registered documents may hand over the same to me in the below mentioned address. General Public are hereby warned that any transactions or dealings concerning the above-mentioned property, using these documents, shall be deemed invalid and shall not bind my client in any manner whatsoever.
Address: GOKUL KUMAR S O, ADVOCATE, No.350, 12th Main, Sector-5, HSR Layout, Bengaluru-560102.
Mob: 8892595626. Email: ADGVK20@GMAIL.COM.

BANGALORE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
T. Chowdaiah Road, Kumara Park West, Bengaluru - 560 020
No. BDA/EM/EE/ID/TENDER/278/2025-26 Date: 30.12.2025
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(Through GoK e-Procurement platform https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in)
The Bangalore Development Authority, Government of Karnataka (hereinafter referred to as the "Authority"), is the nodal agency for the development of the Bangalore region by providing various civic amenities, quality infrastructure and as part of this endeavour, the Authority has decided to undertake "2 lane Bi directional elevated corridor from UAS staff quarters to Mekhri Circle with Rotary up ramp and down ramp arrangement (Bellary Road) Bengaluru" (the "EPC") basis. In this regard, the Authority is desirous of selecting the Concessionaire through a transparent and competitive bidding process.

| Name of the Work | Project Cost in Rs. Crores | EMD Rs. Crore |
|---|---|---|
| 2 lane Bi directional Elevated Corridor from UAS staff quarters to Mekhri Circle with Rotary up ramp and down ramp arrangement (Bellary Road) Bengaluru. | 403.25 | 4.35 |

The Authority invites proposals **(the "Bids")** through e-tendering mode from interested parties in accordance with the Request for Proposal **("RFP").** The RFP document containing instructions to Bidders, criteria for qualification and criteria for evaluation may be downloaded from the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal of Government of Karnataka **("GoK")** viz. **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** and the Bids shall be submitted as per the provisions of the RFP.
**Important Details:** RFP Issue Date: **05.01.2026,** Submission of bid queries: **12.01.2026 at 16:00 Hrs. IST.** Pre-bid meeting Date: **16.01.2026 at 16:00 Hrs. IST,** Last Date for submission of bids:**09.02.2026 up to16:00 Hrs. IST.** Opening of Technical Bids: **11.02.2026 at 16:30 Hrs. IST.**
Contact Person: **Executive Engineer**
Address:**Infrastructure Division, Bangalore Development Authority, Government of Karnataka, T. Chowdaiah Road, Kumarapark West, Bengaluru-560020. Phone: 9449377654, Email: bdaeeprr@gmail.com**
**Note:-** Bangalore Development Authority reserves the right to cancel this invitation and / or invite fresh Bids with or without amendments to this invitation, without liability or any obligation for such invitation and without assigning any reason.
Sd/- Engineer Member, BDA, Bengaluru

## Kogilu residents must wait 2 months for flats

Kogilu, From Page 1

Speaking to *DH*, those evicted from the site say that it would be impossible to wait another two months since they have no alternative accommodation.

"We are living at our relative's house and they are also finding it difficult to accommodate us. There is hardly any space to sleep. Hence, we request the government to accommodate us at their facility at the earliest," said Jabeena, a evicted resident of Kogilu who has been living there since 2001.

Many others also pointed out that their children were studying in the nearby schools and hence they had to live close by and cannot move to relative's houses far away.

# Resorts seek scientific study on impact of safari on wildlife

### 'Attributing fall in wildlife conflicts to safari ban misplaced'

BENGALURU, DHNS

A month after the forest department suspended safari in Bandipur and Nagarahole tiger reserves in the wake of spurt in wildlife conflict, private resorts in the area claimed a revenue loss of Rs 3 crore everyday and urged the government to lift the suspension.

In a letter addressed to the tourism minister, the Karnataka Eco-Tourism Resorts Association (KETRA) claimed that its members have suffered severe and quantifiable losses. They said that while private resorts in the area suffered a loss of Rs 3 crore/day, Jungle Lodges and Forest Department lost Rs 30 lakh/day each. The state exchequer lost Rs 60-70 lakh/day, they said.

The resort owners cited the best practices adopted in Karnataka, the potential of safari as a conservation tool and "success" in mitigating the conflicts by capturing over 20 tigers from the affected regions to bat for the reopening of the safari.

Arjun Kapoor, co-founder of KETRA, said the department has been linked to two unrelated incidents to suspend safari. "The conflict incidents have increased due to a rise in the number of wild animals within the limited space. On the other hand, people in the villages are going to the field at night to switch on the motor, increasing the chances of an encounter," he said.

The letter stated that the livelihood of thousands of daily wagers and contractual staff dependent on eco tourism will be affected. It added that there was no scientific report backing a decision to ban safari.

#### Conservation above tourism

Sources in the forest minister's office said the closure of safari has helped in pooling resources to rescue problem animals. "The truth is that no conservation can succeed without cooperation from the villagers. Any animosity will only have negative impacts. After the ban on safari, there is near-full decline in conflict situations. This has to be considered before deciding on allowing business in sensitive areas," he said.

#### Tourism image

S Mahalingaiah, vice president of Karnataka Tourism Society (KTS), said wildlife tourism, along with heritage, was a unique selling proposition of Karnataka's tourism. "Within that, Mysuru's role is unique in that it acts as a major stopover in the tourism circuit. International tourists book tickets three to six months in advance to stay here for two-three days before proceeding to other states. That image has taken a hit now," he said.

He said attributing the reduction in conflicts to the ban on safari was misplaced. "Safari is limited to less than 10% of the protected area. So, it didn't affect wildlife. A good scientific study is required to assess such matters," he said.

# CM writes to Modi, seeks suspension of VB-G RAM G Act

### Says 60:40 funding pattern will make it 'run of the mill' scheme

BENGALURU, DHNS

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to "suspend" the implementation of the Viksit Bharat—Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB — G RAM G) Act, which replaced the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

In a letter to the prime minister, Siddaramaiah argued that the legal guarantee of 125 days (100 days under MGNREGA) was not "absolute," since it was determined by a centrally notified "normative" funding for "notified" areas in each state.

#### Objective parameters

Explaining that these allocations would depend on "objective parameters," the chief minister said: "These parameters are not embedded in the legislation, can be altered at any time, and if finalised without consultation with state governments, will not reflect the diverse and varying needs across States and even within rural regions of the same State."

He argued that this would convert a demand-driven regime into a supply-driven, top-down system, contrary to the current participatory approach where labour budgets are prepared at the Gram Panchayat level.

#### Funding pattern

Taking exception to the changed funding pattern, a 60:40 Centre-state sharing agreement instead of the current 90:10, he felt this change converted a statutory guarantee into a "run of the mill" scheme, burdening the states' finances.

#### States' share

Highlighting that the states would have to pay for anything above the normative allocation, Siddaramaiah said: "This could leave states facing 100% liability for demand beyond a centrally fixed limit. In practice, the guarantee may then depend not only on the normative allocation but also on the state's fiscal capacity."

#### Women's participation

He also highlighted that the stopping of the scheme for 60 days every year during the "peak sowing and harvesting" season could increase bonded/ distress labour, reduce women's participation and so on.

Siddaramaiah felt the removal of Mahatma Gandhi's name "sends an unfortunate message and weakens its moral authority."

"I urge your personal intervention to suspend the implementation of the VB-G RamG Act and to initiate constitutionally mandated consultations with state governments to strengthen the right to livelihood and build a resilient Bharat," the chief minister said in the letter to the prime minister.

## Electrification will enable B'luru-M'luru Vande Bharat: Min

**NEW DELHI, DHNS:** Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Tuesday said that completion of the electrification between Sakleshpur and Subrahmanya Road railway route will enable operation of the Vande Bharat Express train on the route.

"Now we will be able to run modern electric superfast train services including Vande Bharat train through this route to Mangaluru," Vaishnaw said in a statement here.

Earlier Dakshina Kannada BJP Lok Sabha member Brijesh Chowta has urged the minister to start Vande Bharat Express train between Bengaluru and Mangaluru upon completion of the electrification of the route.

The Indian Railways completed the electrification between Sakleshpur-Subrahmanya Road Ghat Section of railway track on Bengaluru-Mangaluru route, one of the most difficult and technically challenging terrains on the Indian Railways network and successfully completed electric locomotive trial December 28, 2025.

With this section completing the electrification, the minister said now the entire Bengaluru-Mangaluru rail route is now fully electrified. This will improve rail connectivity, operational efficiency and sustainability in the region.

"The 55-km long railway track between Sakleshpur and Subrahmanya Road, is extremely complex having no approach road to the railway track. It includes a steep ruling gradient of 1 in 50, 57 tunnels, 226 bridges, and 108 sharp curves. The area is also highly prone to landslides, especially during the monsoon. Electrifying this stretch was therefore a significant engineering challenge," the ministry said.

The electrification work began in December 2023. The project included the construction of five switching stations and full overhead electrification. To ensure safety and reliability, the maximum distance between traction poles was kept at 67.5 metres.

"In the 57 tunnels, 427 main brackets and 427 spare brackets were installed. Detailed geological studies were carried out with support from the National Institute of Rock Mechanics and Bangalore University. To ensure long-term safety, pull-out tests were conducted at every bracket location to check anchoring strength," the statement said.

## Shah, Mamata in war of words over 'infiltration'

Mamata, From Page 1

"Our government in West Bengal will not only stop the infiltration, but it will also identify every illegal migrant one by one and drive them out of the country."

The chief minister hit back at the Union Home Minister while speaking at a rally in Bankura a few hours later.

"Does infiltration happen only in Bengal? Does it not happen in Kashmir? An incident took place in Delhi some days ago. Are infiltrators present nowhere except Bengal?" So, was it you who did it?" Mamata said, demanding Shah's resignation as the Union Home Minister. "Why is this state being blamed all the time for infiltration when a terror attack happened in Jammu and Kashmir, and a blast took place in New Delhi?"

Mamata reiterated her allegation that the Election Commission had conducted the Special Intensive Review of the electoral rolls in West Bengal only to ensure an advantage for the BJP in the coming Assembly polls.

"Today, Dushasan has come to Bengal. Whenever elections are around, Duryodhan and Dushasan land here," the chief minister said, invoking the Mahabharata. She apparently referred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi as "Duryodhan" and the Union Home Minister as "Dushashan".

### DATE WITH THE DIVINE

**Devotees enter the Iskcon temple through the 'Vaikunta Dwara' on the occasion of Vaikunta Ekadashi in Bengaluru on Tuesday.** DH PHOTO/M S MANJUNATH

## Clarify on drug factory ops, city top cop tells Maha agency

Drug, From Page 1

Police sources said the seized material was in different stages of processing, and preliminary assessments suggested that the valuation could vary significantly depending on whether it was computed as raw material, semi-processed substance or finished narcotics ready for retail distribution.

The commissioner also expressed serious reservations over the Maharashtra police projecting the Bengaluru operation as a standalone raid, despite extensive logistical and operational support provided by the Bengaluru city police.

Senior officers of the Central Crime Branch (CCB), personnel from multiple local police stations and technical teams had assisted the Maharashtra ANTF at various stages, including intelligence development, reconnaissance, surveillance of suspects, coordination of logistics, and execution of the raids, he said.

"This was not an isolated operation carried out by one agency. It involved close coordination and support from Bengaluru city police at multiple levels," the commissioner stated.

Highly placed sources said the lack of clarity in valuation and attribution has led to internal correspondence between the two police forces, as Bengaluru police have sought to ensure transparency, procedural accuracy and proper documentation in a case that is likely to have inter-state and national ramifications.

The drug factory bust had earlier been projected by the Maharashtra ANTF as one of its biggest successes, with officials claiming seizure of narcotics and materials worth Rs 56 crore. However, Bengaluru police officials said that valuation without detailed technical backing could lead to discrepancies during prosecution, especially when the case comes up for trial.

Investigations into the supply chain, funding network, and interstate links of the drug manufacturing racket are continuing, with multiple agencies expected to share inputs in the coming days.

Another senior police officer told *DH* that according to the protocol, if any agency conducts raids in a state, they should register some basic details at local police stations. "But they did not share any details and just left the city. The city police knew about four of the accused involved in drug peddling network and teams were working on it to trace them."

The Bengaluru city police also stated that their team, after examining the chemicals seized by the Maharashtra police, opined that they were not sufficient to manufacture any kind of narcotic or psychotropic drugs.

### ◆ WEATHER ◆

**Overview:** Dry weather prevailed over Coastal Karnataka, South Interior Karnataka and North Interior Karnataka

**Forecast Dec 31:** Dry weather likely to prevail over the state.

| INTERIOR NORTH | Max | Min | Rain |
|---|---|---|---|
| Belagavi | 29.2 | 9.8 | 00 |
| Bidar | 27 | 9.8 | 00 |
| Vijayapura | 27 | 09 | 00 |
| Dharwad | 27.4 | 10.8 | 00 |
| Haveri | 28.8 | 12.2 | 00 |
| Kalaburagi | 30.4 | 14.6 | 00 |
| Raichur | 27.8 | 13 | 00 |
| **COASTAL** | | | |
| Honnavar | 33.6 | 19.5 | 00 |
| Karwar | 35.2 | 19.4 | 00 |
| Shirali | NA | NA | NA |
| Mangaluru | 32.6 | 23 | 00 |

| INTERIOR SOUTH | Max | Min | Rain |
|---|---|---|---|
| Agumbe | NA | NA | NA |
| Bengaluru | 28 | 18.4 | 00 |
| Ballari | NA | NA | NA |
| Chamarajanagar | NA | NA | NA |
| Chikkamagaluru | NA | NA | NA |
| Chitradurga | 27.9 | 15.2 | 00 |
| Davangere | 29 | 14.3 | 00 |
| Hassan | 29.4 | 12 | 00 |
| Mysuru | 29.2 | 15.2 | 00 |
| Madikeri | NA | NA | NA |
| Kolar | 28.8 | 15.2 | 00 |
| **OTHER STATIONS** | | | |
| New Delhi | 20.3 | 9.4 | 00 |
| Kolkata | 18.8 | 12.1 | 00 |
| Mumbai | 32.1 | 16.5 | 00 |
| Chennai | 29.1 | 21.6 | 00 |
| Pune | 28.1 | 9.9 | 00 |
| Hyderabad | 27.2 | 13.1 | 00 |
| Th'puram | 33.9 | 23.2 | 00 |

## Tragedy-hit Kundalahalli PG had a pending demolition order

Kundalahalli, From Page 1

#### Cramped conditions

The PG, with 47 rooms in total, had about 55 people. Of the 47 rooms, one room on the ground floor had been converted into a kitchen space, while two more rooms on the ground floor were used to house staff members.

The staff who stayed on the premises included a housekeeper, Deepak, and a cook, Mukesh, along with his assistant. The manager, Roja, stayed off the premises and would mostly visit in the evenings, said residents.

#### Early warnings ignored

On Monday, the day of the cylinder blast, there were two commercial cylinders and one domestic cylinder available on the premises — all placed on the ground floor. Of these, one cylinder, which was placed outside the kitchen in the common cooking area, had a noticeable leak, said the PG inhabitants.

"A few people had informed me about the gas leak and smell before 3 pm, and I had informed Mukesh about this. However, he merely toggled with it, which led to a hissing sound and a pungent gas smell. Despite this, Mukesh said everything seemed fine, and he'd take care of it. He was always distracted by his phone," Deepak, the housekeeper, told *DH*.

Despite the cramped conditions within the PG, it remained one of the better accommodations in the neighbourhood, said Rahul, a 22-year-old software engineer who'd moved into this PG six months back.

Rahul, along with several others, jumped over to the neighbouring buildings to save themselves from the fire.

"As we noticed smoke entering our floor, we panicked. Due to a lack of ventilation, smoke and soot started travelling up the building. We covered our noses and eyes with whatever was available and went to the terrace and jumped over to the next building," he shared, adding that a bigger tragedy was avoided as a large number of the PG residents were out of town for the winter holidays.

## Kolar DC's office receives another hoax bomb threat

**KOLAR, DHNS:** For the second time in a month, the Kolar DC's office received a hoax bomb threat in the morning on Tuesday.

As had happened previously, the threat was conveyed in the 'Subject' section of the email that was sent to the office. Interestingly, while the text in the 'Subject' section claimed that an RDX-based IED had been placed at the office, the mail itself was about a fake passport ring.

## Student dies after coming under toppled truck

**BELAGAVI, DHNS:** A school student was killed on the spot and two others sustained severe injuries after they came under a truck that toppled on a curve near Sirgur village in Raibag taluk on Tuesday. The students were on their way to school when the accident occured.

Amit Kamble (10) came under the truck and was killed on the spot. Anjali Kamble and Avinash Kamble suffered injuries and have been admitted at private hospital in Harugeri for treatment. Kuduchi police have registered a case.

## Admin reforms panel suggests closure/merger of 1,000 inactive account heads

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** The Karnataka Administrative Reforms Commission-2 has recommended the termination or merger of a total of 1,000 inactive heads of accounts that have zero or negative balances.

The Commission submitted its 10th report to the Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday.

Addressing a news conference after the submission of the report, R V Deshpande, senior lawmaker and chairman of the Commission, said, "In the 10th report, a total of 2,874 account heads or schemes have been reviewed. About one thousand account heads with zero or negative balances have been identified, and recommendations have been made to merge or terminate them."

As mentioned in the report, the allocation of account heads less than one crore rupees has reduced from Rs 1,336 crore to Rs 105 crore.

"Since the implementation of this move is not feasible, it has been suggested to terminate or merge them. Old schemes with limited scope and no benefits should be discontinued, and when introducing new schemes, the policy of "one entry and one exit" should be followed. We have made recommendations for the cancellation of schemes department-wise," he stated.

The report highlighted that at least 280 schemes have an allocation of less than Rs 1 crore, and most of them were Centrally sponsored ones, and the Commission recommended for closure of such schemes.

The Commission has noted that there are about 2,874 heads of accounts being operational in the government, outlined in the state budget document and reported by the Planning Department.

The Commission opined that the merger or closure will help reduce the volume of transactional accounting entries, enhance clarity for departments during budget preparation and release procedures and improve transparency in expenditure tracking, facilitate better monitoring of scheme performance and fund flows and minimise errors, duplication, and administrative burden on departments Recommendation.

#### Recommendations

The Karnataka Administrative Reforms commission-2 has recommended conducting a region-based study before creating new positions.

Explaining this, the Commission Chairperson R V Deshpande said, "Based on workload assessment, staff should be redeployed. Additional staff should be assigned to vacant frontline offices. Unfilled clerical posts should be converted into executive and technical posts for multi-tasking. Scientific distribution of posts has been recommended based on population, geographical area, and backwardness."

The Commission even stated, "Instead of approving vacant posts one by one, an annual recruitment plan should be prepared, and overall approval should be given. Until redeployment is completed, creation of new posts or promotions should not be permitted."

"For workload assessment, the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms should be strengthened. Even after the tenure of the Administrative Reforms Commission ends, reform processes should continue. For this, a Reforms Monitoring Unit dedicated to administrative reforms should be established in the department. Quarterly review under the Chief Secretary and annual review under the Chief Minister will ensure high-level accountability. This will make departments committed to achieving reform goals," Deshpande said.

Avenues

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# Supreme Court's reset reclaims justice

By initiating corrective action on important judicial rulings, the Supreme Court has reinstated justice in two diverse cases with underlying common themes of State, society, and public scrutiny. One involved its own order that accepted a new definition of the Aravalli range, which would have exposed large sections of the hills to mining and commercial exploitation. The other action was in response to the Delhi High Court's order suspending the prison sentence of Kuldeep Singh Sengar, a former BJP MLA from Uttar Pradesh, in the Unnao rape case, and granting him bail. The public had an emotional stake in both cases, as seen in the protests organised against the rulings by activists and civil society.

In the Aravalli case, the Court revisited, *suo motu*, its ruling of November 20 on the definition of hills in the range, and placed the order in abeyance. It has decided to constitute an expert committee to assess concerns over the elevation-based definition of the range, the ecological continuity, and permissible mining in view of the environmental importance of the hills. The redefinition of the hills based on their height had triggered a controversy, as it excluded most parts of the range from its scope. It also varied from a slope-based definition approved by a committee the Court had appointed earlier. The apex court has done well to bring the matter to a pause and put it to further scrutiny. This is an important intervention, considering that the government appeared to be in a hurry and less persuaded by the environmental implications than by other considerations. It must now stop all construction and mining in the Aravalli region, pending closure of the matter by the Court.

**The Court prevents subversion of justice by reversing missteps in the Aravalli and Unnao cases**

On the High Court's order in the Unnao rape case, the Court stayed the ruling which would have enabled the former legislator, found guilty in multiple cases, including a criminal sexual offence, to roam free and ultimately, undermine the ends of justice. The High Court's decision was based on a narrow and technical interpretation of the term "public servant". Sengar's benefiting from this textual interpretation was widely seen as a subversion of justice, especially because he had wielded his power and authority in committing a heinous sexual crime, harassing and persecuting the survivor, and even conspiring to kill her father. Justice prevails when its miscarriage is prevented, too. Both judgments are remarkable because they are in line with public sensitivities on the issues involved. Here, judicial thinking also responded, rightly, to popular concerns.

# Road safety cannot be an afterthought

The devastating bus fire on National Highway 48 near Chitradurga on December 25 is not just another accident; it is the predictable outcome of a transport system that treats safety as optional. A private sleeper coach was hit head-on by a container truck that reportedly jumped the median near Gorlathu Cross in Hiriyur taluk, and was gutted within minutes. Seven people were killed and several others seriously injured, most of them trapped in their sleep as the vehicle turned into a furnace. Investigations have since revealed that the bus was carrying inflammable oil cans, which may have intensified the blaze and hastened its spread. This underscores how little has changed since the Kurnool tragedy barely two months ago, where nearly 20 lives were lost after illegally transported smartphones triggered lithium-ion battery explosions. That disaster was supposed to be a turning point. Instead, the Chitradurga incident shows that lessons remain unlearnt.

Uncomfortable questions persist: are buses designed and operated with passenger safety in mind? What are they permitted to carry in their luggage holds? And why are violations repeatedly discovered only after lives are lost? It has emerged that this particular bus had undergone surprise inspections, with its documents, fitness certificate, and even emergency exits found to be in order. That, however, offers little comfort. Compliance in one instance does not absolve a system where many sleeper buses continue to operate with blocked exits, flammable interiors, and unauthorised structural modifications. The standard response after such disasters follows a tired script: blame overspeeding, fatigue or driver negligence. While these factors matter, they obscure a larger truth. Highway design itself can be a silent killer. The Bengaluru-Mysuru highway is a textbook example. It has seen over 200 deaths and more than 1,500 accidents since opening. Unscientific entry and exit points, weak medians, poorly marked black spots, and water stagnation causing hydroplaning are common features on highways, which often slice through villages without safe crossings, creating conditions where one mistake can become fatal.

**Two months after Kurnool, the Chitradurga bus fire further exposes failures in safety enforcement**

The solutions are obvious. Strict enforcement of the Centre's fire detection and suppression rules for sleeper buses must become non-negotiable. Rigorous physical inspections should be conducted, and illegal transport of hazardous materials in passenger vehicles must attract severe penalties. Dangerous highway stretches must be audited and redesigned instead of merely being plastered with speed-limit signs. Above all, the government must act before, not after, another tragedy. Chitradurga is not an aberration. It is a warning, and ignoring it yet again would amount to wilful negligence.

POLITICS OF IDENTITY

# Two elections, one threat that blurs borders

As Bangladesh and West Bengal go to vote, divisive poll narratives risk fuelling cross-border animosity

**LT GEN BHOPINDER SINGH (RETD)**

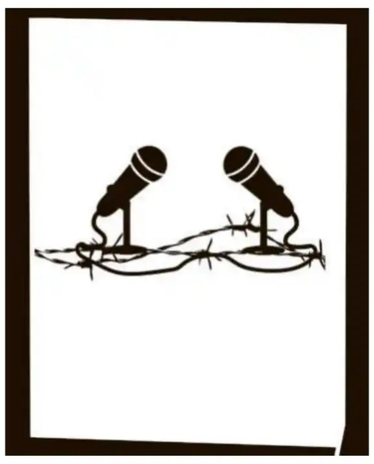
The elections to the West Bengal Assembly are expected to be held in March-April 2026. They could coincide disconcertingly close to the general elections in Bangladesh, which are to be held on February 12. This sets up a platform, dangerously, for an expression of West Bengal's issues historically intertwined with the former East Bengal.

The cross-border interplay is particularly relevant to certain political forces in India to polarise the societies, just as they are relevant to similarly religious-minded forces in Bangladesh, in the run-up to the elections there. Ironically, both these political forces seeking electorally convenient polarisation are on opposite sides of religious denominations. It is a case of opposite, yet like-minded bigotry, which seeks to posit a distractive and divisive agenda of religiosity over more important issues such as socio-economic development, education, employment, and agrarian distress.

If West Bengal is a state trying hard to overcome its anti-industry image owing to ideological/political choices, trade unionism, and conflicts over land acquisition, Bangladesh, with its rising tensions/protests, political instability, and communalism, is suffering a perception challenge that could derail its "economic miracle" trajectory from the last couple of decades. On both sides of the border, there is a dire need to debate and discuss hard data on employment opportunities, infrastructure, social harmony, and long-term development. But the reality is that the politics of reimagined identity, backed with hate mongering, fear, and faith, is poised to dominate the elections. As political scientist Christophe Jaffrelot insists, "When identity becomes the primary political currency, issues of livelihood, health, and education are pushed to the margins."

A spill-over of toxic religiosity from the Bangladeshi electoral hustings is inevitable. It is likely to be appropriated and repurposed for inflammatory narratives of othering in West Bengal. The sad failure to deliver economic security on both sides of the border will not lead to a necessary questioning of the same by the masses. Instead, identity politics will be valourised, and symbolic victories will be misread as material progress. The ensuing Bangladeshi tumult is already fodder for West Bengal politics as a cautionary tale, marked with conversations of a "takeover" by illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, and consequences of "appeasement" of certain faiths.

These are not unfair conversations, as India can ill-afford any more refugees/illegal immigrants, as they are an unsustainable burden on the economy



and a security threat. But the problem starts when the partisan framework of "them-versus-us" is not framed in an Indian-versus-Bangladeshi context, but in a Hindu-versus-Muslim frame. This simplistic outlook slots people of specific religious faiths into one country, and not the other. In the bargain, many of our own become "them". So the familiar narrative of the West Bengal dispensation going "soft" on illegal immigrants gains currency, though border management and the protection of territorial integrity are Central Government subjects.

Paradoxically, the creation of Bangladesh punctured the 'Two-Nation Theory', which premised that religion ought to be the basis of nationhood. Bengalis in what was once called East Pakistan insisted that culture, language, and good governance triumphed over the inherent pettiness of co-religiosity. But as the Bangladesh of 2026 is looking increasingly different from what was conceived in 1971, many underlying principles of politics – in Bangladesh and West Bengal – will be rewritten, with religiosity at the core.

### A recipe for polarisation

Narratives that initially centred on the weakening of democratic institutions, nepotism, and economic frustrations have been hijacked by religious parties in Bangladesh. The initial trigger to the Bangladeshi youth uproar was the controversial and partisan High Court decision to reinstate 30% job quotas for descendants of the liberation war freedom fighters. But now, that frustration among the youth has given way to the anchorage of anti-India and religiously charged sentiments that have nothing to do with the foundational issues.

With the relatively moderate Awami League banned from contesting the forthcoming elections, the choice India has will be between the bad and the worse – the return of the Bangladesh National Party led by Tarique Rahman, or more worryingly, a coalition of religious parties led by the Jamaat-e-Islami. Either way, the road to Jatiya Sangsad, the Bangladesh parliament, will be paved for the political side that sounds shriller about India. This regrettable clamour amongst the two principal blocs in the Bangladeshi electoral fray to sound more nationalistic and pious will provide ammunition to the national/regional parties in West Bengal to stitch their respective spiels, bereft of introspection or insight on the real issues of the state. Religion will override real issues, yet again.

To hold some of our own minorities to the politics and passions of our neighbouring countries, be it Pakistan or Bangladesh, is to short-sell the idea of India, which was always in sharp contrast with the concept of religion-driven nationhood, which defined Pakistan at inception, and seemingly Bangladesh now. Care to not fall for the short-termism of an electoral victory and risk a larger polarisation in India with its myriad minorities is the crying call of the hour. However, these are different times. In the era of the freedom struggle, India's leadership had a noble and inclusive bearing, in contrast with the leadership of Pakistan (and Bangladesh today). That separation of moral grounding no longer exists.

*(The writer is a former Lt Governor of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Puducherry)*

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

# A bottle of rum, none too glorious

After all my efforts, the bottle was too small even for a money plant

**NAGRAJ RAO**

It is Christmas time. How could I not remember my encounter with the Christmas (Plum) cake? About four decades back, we were residing in a comparatively conservative (at that time) part of Bengaluru. My wife decided to bake a plum cake. One of the important ingredients, rum, was not readily available at home.

Well, the rum essence could have served the purpose but she wanted the "real" thing and that too immediately. So we had to buy it from a wine store in the neighbourhood. Asking my wife or daughters to go and fetch it was ruled out so the task had befallen on yours truly. But then my daughters had serious misgivings about my going because if I happened to be found loitering anywhere near the bar by any of their class mates, the next day whole school will be agog with the news that their dad goes to the bar ('*Ek bar*' could easily be interpreted as '*bar bar*').

One ingenious suggestion that came my way was that I could go there with my face covered. But I put my foot down about this atrocious suggestion and refused to go in a fancy dress.

But the task had got to be done. It was approaching dusk so I was less likely to be recognised. I took my chance, hopefully unobserved, to the wine shop. After entering the shop, I asked the man at the counter to give me a bottle of rum. That bloke had seen me at the nearby bakery a number of times but never at his bar. He gave a meaningful look as if to say, *neevu kuditheera antha gotthirlilla* (Did not know that you also drank)!

"Sir, *ille beka*?" (roughly translated to do you want to have it right here?), he asked. I looked at him blankly and then the penny dropped. He wanted to know whether I wanted to gulp it down standing right at the counter. I shuddered to even imagine myself doing so. Then he picked a bottle from the shelf and showed its label to me for my approval.

I snapped, "My wife wanted only Old Monk." He gave a startled look.

I was irritated but asked him to pack it quickly. I rushed home with my booty covered in an old newspaper, fervently hoping that I managed to get home without being spotted and placed the packet triumphantly before my wife. She eagerly opened it and her face dropped, disappointment writ large on her face.

She face-palmed and blurted, "Ayyo, *idu tumba chikku sizu. Idaralli moneyplant hakokke aagalla*." (This is too small a size. One cannot plant a money plant in it). So much for all my efforts.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## The shrinking space of belonging

Across the country, an incessant chain of harassment, intimidation, and targeted violence has created an atmosphere the nation has rarely witnessed. The repeated targeting of Kashmiri shawl sellers in Himachal Pradesh and Haryana is not an isolated development, but part of a wider pattern where identity itself becomes a trigger for suspicion, abuse, and public humiliation. For decades, these vendors lived and worked peacefully, yet today their own country feels narrow and suffocating to them. This was followed by the brutal attack on Angel Chakma from Tripura in Dehradun, who later died despite identifying himself as an Indian. Tragically, those from whom he should have felt belonging and protection turned into threats to his life. When such violence is normalised and accountability weakens, the very idea of equal citizenship begins to erode.

**Kyamudin Ansari**, Mumbai

## Shun casual racism

I refer to your editorial 'Where mobs fan flames of hate' (Dec 30). The latest incidents of mob violence, rooted in prejudice, highlight a dangerous divide within our society that we cannot ignore. Though tougher legislation is required, our schools, workplaces, and communities must also work to combat casual racism. Social media may feed intolerance, but the tolerance of bystanders allows it to flourish unchecked. The concept of Indian unity is undermined when our domestic migrants are met with suspicion rather than solidarity.

**Shruthi Sudheer**, Bengaluru

## Teach values

As the editorial 'Where mobs fan flames of hate' (Dec 30) rightly points out, repeated incidents of religious, regional, and racial violence are deeply concerning and show how weak our civic education has become. Values like unity in diversity are often spoken about, but people are rarely taught what they mean in daily life: respecting difference and living peacefully with others.

**Pooja Shekar**, Bengaluru

## Enforcement vs. empathy

Apropos 'After demolition, some damage control' (Dec 30), while the government has the right to reclaim public land, executing demolitions at dawn creates a humanitarian crisis that outweighs the legal objective. A fair legal process should provide families with enough notice and support to relocate, rather than forcing them out when they are most vulnerable. While offering new housing is a positive step, it does not undo the loss of dignity and belongings. True governance must balance the enforcement with empathy.

**Dhatri B S**, Bengaluru

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

Many people identified as Bangladeshi have been found in West Bengal. This affects native Indians by impacting culture, taking away jobs, consuming resources, encroaching on land, and disturbing social harmony.

**Satish Chandra Dubey**, Union Minister

The great enemy of truth is very often not the lie—deliberate, contrived and dishonest—but the myth—persistent, persuasive and unrealistic.

**John F Kennedy**

TO BE PRECISE

IN PERSPECTIVE

# Seasonal fixes can't clear Delhi's air

The smog crisis calls for long-term strategy, science-backed enforcement, and unwavering political will

**B K SINGH**

The causes of air pollution in Delhi have been known for about 25 years. In 1999, a group of 200 scientists from different parts of the world, led by atmospheric scientist V Ramanathan, identified and traced the 'Asian Brown Cloud', a massive haze covering the Indian subcontinent between October and February, to fossil fuel consumption in industries, power houses, transport systems, and wood-burning by small businesses and households.

Recent research from the Ministry of Earth Sciences and other institutions had similar findings, underlining that biomass burning contributed to nearly 50% of PM2.5 and PM10 in Delhi during winter nights. In 2023, another study suggested that 37% of PM2.5 is caused by coal-burning in industries and power generation. Vehicular pollution is the third-largest cause of pollution. Approximately 220 crore tons of fossil fuel and biomass are burned in India annually; 85% of it is from coal and biomass, and the remaining from oil and gas.

The political tussle between the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the present BJP government in Delhi has deferred temporary solutions. In the winter of 2023, the AAP government, despite assurances, failed to implement cloud-seeding, while the BJP government's experiment in October this year failed to deliver. Though cloud-seeding has produced good results in drought-prone areas during the rainy season, nowhere has it been successful in winters, when clouds are absent.

Closing schools, suspending construction, preventing the entry of heavy vehicles, sprinkling water on roads, etc., are short-term solutions and have a negligible impact. Millions of people living around Delhi are facing health emergencies, with long-term exposure to pollution threatening damage beyond the lungs.

The situation has been worsening, even as the authorities respond with uninformed strategies. The Delhi Environment Minister's claim that eight months are not sufficient to fix the soaring AQI levels may fit the political narrative, but it does not inspire confidence for efficient mitigation efforts on the ground.

### The Beijing model

In the 1990s, Beijing faced a similar air quality emergency, pushing the Chinese government towards some tough decisions. Coal- and wood-consuming industries were directed to transition to cleaner energy. Wherever there were bottlenecks in developing solar energy at speed and scale, the industries were relocated 400 km away from the city. The government invested heavily in revamping the public transport system, significantly improving accessibility. People were encouraged to cycle. Aggressive promotion of electric vehicles was crucial in the long-term strategy. The authorities also coordinated with counterparts in the adjoining areas on measures to check regional pollution.

Delhi has the option of taking the Beijing route. The priorities and methods have to be aligned with a long-term vision – there is no alternative to stringent controls on biomass and coal burning, and the consumption of vehicular fuel. Temporary solutions will not work. China took two decades to remove its winter haze; Delhi must make a start now to ensure that the National Capital Region is in line with the Viksit Bharat agenda by 2047.

Extensive greening of the Delhi-NCR region needs to be prioritised. The capability of trees to bring relief by absorbing pollutants has largely remained under-explored in our policy statements.

A year ago, the Government of Haryana, with the support of the Union Environment Ministry, came up with a proposal to create a tree wall all along the Aravalli range, from Gujarat to Delhi. The states of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Delhi, during the monsoon of 2025, commenced planting an area of around 1.15 million hectares. The programme was set to be completed by 2027.

The Ministry's elevation-based redefinition of the Aravalli hills and the Supreme Court's initial acceptance of the move had created a stir, raising concerns that large portions of the Aravallis would be opened up for mining and real estate. The ruling, which threatened to aggravate the winter haze, stands stalled, with the apex court keeping its original order in abeyance.

Apart from checking the spread of the Thar desert towards the Delhi region, the Aravallis have protected alluvial valleys of the northern plains from the Westerlies. The degradation of these hills over a long period has also led to an extension of urban areas on Delhi's outskirts, aggravating pollution.

Delhi's pollution warrants coordinated, multi-pronged action to tackle biomass burning in households and industries, stubble burning in farmlands, industrial and vehicular pollution, and dust from construction sites and roads across states within a 350-km radius. The Aravalli ruling may defer greater degradation of the range, but the pause should not take the authorities' eyes off the big picture.

*(The writer is a former head of Forest Force, Karnataka)*

# From Independence to welfare: Congress's approach to social justice

SATISH JARKIHOLI

As the Indian National Congress marked its Foundation Day on December 28, it is fitting not merely to reflect on an organisation of enduring political relevance but to reaffirm the soul of the Congress: its relentless commitment to social justice, equality, and upliftment of the common person.

The story of the Congress is the chronicle of a people's movement that has stood, without wavering, with India's weakest, poorest and most marginalised citizens.

More than a century ago, in pre-Independence India, leaders such as Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade helped shape the moral compass of the Congress. As a founder of the party, Ranade did not merely debate constitutional rights; he fought social evils such as child marriage, campaigned for girls' education and widow remarriage, and boldly asked a traditional society to "humanise, equalise and spiritualise" itself. These ideas, deeply rooted in Indian ethos, sowed the first seeds of the Congress belief that freedom without equality is incomplete freedom.

## Gandhi, Nehru and the masses

Under Mahatma Gandhi, the Congress became the movement of every Indian: peasants and workers, Dalits and Adivasis, women and the rural poor. Gandhi's insistence on eradicating untouchability and championing the dignity of every human being transformed the party into a popular force for inclusion. "To say that a single human being, because of birth, becomes an untouchable... is to deny God," Gandhi declared—a moral injunction that still reflects our core values.

After Independence, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru carried this heritage into governance. As the Republic's first prime minister, he made it the nation's mission to fight poverty, disease and inequality, asserting that democracy must deliver justice to the "peasants and workers of India" who had long been denied opportunity and dignity.

Decades later, when Indira Gandhi articulated *Garibi Hatao*, she was not offering a slogan but a mission to transform lives. Her policies expanded access to credit, empowered small farmers, and ensured that political freedom translated into economic and social opportunity for the poor across India.

The progressive arc continued under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi, who modernised Congress's commitment to rights-based governance. Under the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA), India saw the enactment of transformative laws such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), which guaranteed livelihoods to rural citizens; the Right to Education Act, ensuring schooling for all children; and the National Food Security Act, affirming that no Indian should sleep hungry. These landmark legislations echo Gandhi's talisman of serving the "last man" in the society.

Rahul Gandhi has repeatedly articulated the core belief that development without dignity is hollow, stating that "there can be no development without dignity... ensuring the dignity of every citizen." His leadership in initiatives such as the Bharat Jodo Yatra reconnected the party with India's vast rural heartland, reinforcing Congress's enduring belief that unity and empathy are inseparable from social justice.

Across generations, Congress has been the political home to India's working class, farmers, women, marginalised castes, religious minorities, and youth. Time and again, whether through rights legislation, public works or welfare schemes, Congress affirmed that government is not a privilege of the few but a trust of the many.

At every stage, the party reframed India's progress not as a trickle-down consequence of markets but as structurally uplifting everyday Indians, irrespective of birth, creed, caste or region, a noble ideal rooted in our Constitution.

Today, that legacy finds vibrant expression in Karnataka, where Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and the Congress government have woven social justice into the fabric of governance through the state's ambitious Five Guarantees programme, a welfare model that many analysts describe as a form of Universal Basic Services.

Gruha Lakshmi scheme places money directly in the hands of women household heads, enhancing financial security and gender empowerment; Anna Bhagya ensures food security; Gruha Jyoti lights up homes with free electricity; Shakti empowers women with free bus travel; and Yuva Nidhi supports unemployed youth with a monthly stipend.

These guarantees have delivered real, measurable benefits to millions, lifting families out of insecurity and giving them the confidence to shape their own futures, which is the very essence of social justice.

Our political opponents may cast these initiatives as "freebies", but the people know better. They know that welfare is not charity—it is entitlement, a rightful share of the nation's wealth and progress. The impact of these policies is demonstrable, from empowering women to lighting up villages, from guaranteeing food to supporting youth, affirming Congress's belief that no Indian should be left behind.

As we celebrate the Foundation Day of the Indian National Congress, we reaffirm that our legacy is not bound by history alone. It is lived every day in the aspirations of those we serve. From Ranade's social reform spirit, through the transformative eras of Gandhi, Nehru and Indira, to today's guarantees for the people of Karnataka, Congress stands committed on the side of justice, dignity and the common man.

This is our heritage, and this will remain our promise!

*(The writer is a Congress leader and the Minister of the Public Works Department, Government of Karnataka)*

In 2025, rock was still hanging in. As artificial intelligence infiltrates music, the genre's handmade imperfections are more crucial than ever

JON PARELES

Karly Hartzman of Wednesday unfurls a scream. NYT

# Who says Rock is dead?

The 21st century has not been kind to rock. Pop, hip-hop, R&B, country and Latin music have all pushed the genre out of the commercial and cultural mainstream. In retrospect, rock's last grand heyday was in the 1990s, when grunge, nu-metal and pop-punk were all happily — well, more like furiously — blasting away.

But rock was already being stripped for parts. Country was latching onto arena rock's most crowd-pleasing sounds, hip-hop was borrowing drumbeats and riffs, and pop performers learned to treat electric guitars as fashion statements and attitude signals, if only for the length of a song. While some surviving classic-rock acts still sell out arenas today, most 21st century rockers are well aware that their chosen idiom is likely to remain a niche choice. One indicator: In recent years, the Grammy Awards haven't handed out the best rock album trophy during prime time.

But rock has stubbornly stuck around, and in 2025 rock bands still raised a ruckus. They have a vast available vocabulary: psychedelia to punk, rockabilly to shoegaze, yacht rock to emo, prog-rock to industrial. And it's not as if a band has to choose just one. In an era of streaming that offers every timeline all at once, the most striking rock bands have been demolishing pigeonholes.

The limited expectations for 21st-century rock may just have turned out to be freeing. For songwriters, musicians and — with luck — enough fans to support them, rock is far from played out. Consider just a few examples from bands that have been forging their music in time-tested rock style: gigging, making multiple albums, gigging some more.

The New York City band Geese stirred up wildly disparate praise and scorn in 2025. Its third full-length album, "Getting Killed," flaunts Cameron Winter's wayward vocals, songs that hopscotch through decades and lyrics that pivot from heartfelt insights to absurdist doggerel and back. Is Geese a rightful critic's darling, a spoiled put-on, neither, both or more? Winter's stage presence drew enough notice to merit a parody on "Saturday Night Live."

Turnstile, a 15-year-old band from Baltimore that emerged from hardcore but was never constrained by it, released "Never Enough," a sleek, electronics-buttressed outpouring of songs about connection, longing and loss. Another band with a punk and hardcore foundation, the Armed, charged off in the opposite direction; it ferociously cranked up the frenzy and distortion, screaming and stomping its way through the songs on its aptly titled album "The Future Is Here and Everything Needs to Be Destroyed."

M(h)aol, a post-punk Irish band — named after an Irish feminist, Gráinne Mhaol, and *maol*, the Irish Gaelic word for shorn or bare — honed terse, clattery, dissonant songs on its album "Something Soft."

On *Bleeds*, the North Carolina-rooted band Wednesday, led by Karly Hartzman, backed her calamitous narratives and leaping melodies with explosive, feedback-laced grunge dynamics or twangy country-rock. And New York duo Water From Your Eyes used the studio to toy with low-fi indie-rock, intricate math-rock and more, twisting every source.

Now that every computer is a potential instrument, library and recording studio, it has never been easier to create music alone or via shifting virtual collaborations. Artificial intelligence promises to reduce human input even more; for some listeners in 2025, the hollow mediocrity of the AI-generated band Velvet Sundown was palatable enough. But rock's persistence in the face of machine-tooled music is a welcome sign of humanist obstinacy.

For all the attractions of computerized convenience and digital precision, there's still traction in the longtime archetype of the rock band as a gang of unruly outsiders. A working band is a contentious team that makes its own rules, unites incongruous personalities, works beyond (or revels in) limitations, aims for improbable synergies and makes a lot of noise along the way. There's friction, but there's also purpose; there's instinct along with calculation. Rock promises the physical sensation and lived-in experience of hands on instruments and voices being pushed, of callused fingers and breathless effort. And there's passion, even when it's wrongheaded or contrary to convention.

A rock band is also a bulky physical presence: a roomful of people, instruments, amplifiers and mics, not to mention the pedals and cables and stands. It's not necessarily streamlined or digitally optimized. Anything might fritz out or feed back — and might make a sound no one expected and everybody loves. Machines can sample those unforeseen sounds — hip-hop regularly turns noises into hooks — but rock makes them happen in real time.

It's easily possible to dial some randomness into the tempo of a drum loop or to tweak the tone of a recorded instrument. But happy accidents, and what happens as people respond to them in turn, are still best left to musicians who are listening to one another.

Human perception perks up at imperfections, irritants and disruptions. As a matter of survival, we need to decide, and fast, what's a threat and what's simply a thrill. Rock constantly takes advantage of those reactions. A great rock song is a battle, and a balance, between order and chaos, feeling and technique, signal and essential noise.

In 2025, hand-played rock infiltrated at least a little upper-echelon pop. Justin Bieber enlisted songwriter, producer, guitarist and multi-instrumentalist Dijon (whose last name is Duenas) for his albums *Swag* and *Swag II*. Dijon is one among many credits on the tracks, but *Daisies* — a mega-hit that helped earn Grammy nominations for *Swag* and a producer nomination for Dijon — has a jammy, guitar-plucking feel that's only a little more sleek and poppy than the Prince-like rock-R&B songs on Dijon's 2025 album, *Baby*.

Bieber has long been a savvy trend-spotter, anticipating pop currents. Maybe he senses some residual, primal longing for a human touch as the machines encroach ever further.

Yet even with those stirrings, no one should expect rock to ever dominate music again. Generations of listeners have been trained on computer-tuned voices and metronomic beats, and streaming algorithms are relentlessly tabulating mass tastes. AI will no doubt be regurgitating whatever got the most clicks.

Rock seems more than likely to remain a minority preference — but that might be the best outcome. Whenever rock has grown too mainstream, polished or pretentious, it has self-corrected, knocking itself off its own pedestal with punk in the 1970s, thrash in the 1980s, grunge in the 1990s. Its best chance at 21st-century survival — sustainable survival — is to stay on the fringes, to stay scruffy and intuitive and imperfect, to flaunt its humanity. To be hard, messy work, and to find the beauty in that.

In that sense, rock's story in 2025 is not one of decline so much as recalibration. Stripped of its old claims to dominance, it has shed the burden of speaking for a generation or setting the cultural agenda. What remains is something leaner and truer to its instincts: a practice rather than a product, a method of making sense of the world through volume, friction and collective effort.

**The New York Times**

# All in a surname

KRISHNAN VALAPPIL

The surname, never mandatory until a few decades ago, has now become an instrument of alphabetical tyranny for many South Indians. When government application forms demanded it, countless people found themselves staring at the blank space where it was supposed to be. Some wrote their caste; others used their father's name, while bolder ones – my kin included – front-loaded both the parents' names in Latin American style—turning themselves into walking genealogical shields. The rest seized anything that felt remotely meaningful: ancestral homes, forgotten villages, family legends, rivers—creating alphabetic absurdities just to survive.

If India ever hosted a surname championship, Maharashtra would take the crown before anyone found their voter ID. Packed with Patils, Joshis, Ranes and village-prefixed Gaonkars, it becomes a micro-geographical atlas in human form. The region boasts a surname-to-human ratio that defies demographic logic and data storage. Pride here is measured not in GDP but in surnames per capita—a metric that hit saturation long ago. Maharashtra's charm is not just numbers but its onomastic repertoire, which sounds like accidental English comedy: Mr More, Mr Date, Mr Hole, Mr Gate. By the time you reach Mr Pimple, it begins to sound like a dermatology report.

In bygone Kerala, names reflected caste: the humble mostly prefixed caste labels to names, and the elite suffixed them. Unlike Keshavan Nair, a Pulayan (Dalit), Raman could never become Raman Pulayan, as such lexical reversals would have triggered collective cardiac arrest of caste custodians. Over time, these markers shrank to cryptic initials, parodying humility in school registers. A sagacious headmaster spared me this lexicographic ignominy by replacing my caste initial with a melodious territorial surname.

In northern Karnataka, surname genealogy mixes with gastronomy. The chilli grower is Mr Menasinakai, the garlic merchant Mr Bellulli, and the coriander farmer Mr Kothambari—a kitchen garden with voting rights, not a family tree. Historians see a rustic heritage in this; cynics call it primitive SEO, ensuring the taxman never forgets who grew what.

In Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, names turned into compressed autobiographies—initials encoding lineage, village, and ancestry, making introductions obsolete. After the anti-Hindi agitations, a baby-naming renaissance erupted, with names so fiercely Tamil that even Sangam poets might need subtitles. Phonetic border guards then expelled letters like *sha*, *sa*, and *ha*—Aryan trespassers in a Dravidian fortress. My namesake shed imported frills to emerge as the starkly Tamil Kiruttinan—a virtuoso act of alphabetic exile!

Nurseries then produced more than babies; they birthed walking manifestos: Nedunchezhiyan and Kanimozhi—names thick with Tamil pride. The consonant *zh*, unique to Tamil, became a linguistic booby trap. Across India, every introduction turned into experimental theatre, as North Indian tongues tangled and surrendered to the mystical *zh*. In a country craving uniformity, Tamil Nadu chose linguistic guerrilla warfare, wielding a consonant almost none could pronounce—except their arch rivals in the job market, Malayalis. It was as if the state said, "You wanted uniformity? Pronounce this." With just two letters, *zh*, staged a peaceful phonetic coup, forcing northern bureaucrats to reduce such names to bare initials for survival.

In the Northeast, pronunciation becomes an endurance sport. For mainlanders, meeting a Zothanpari or Lalchhuanmawia is less an introduction and more an oral test.

Then arrive the gender-neutrals: Kiran, Gagan and Baby, blithely discarding burdens of anatomy. South Indian parents persist in christening their offspring "Baby", ensuring that each one becomes a lifelong crisis centre.

Consequence: utter chaos, a Baby uncle, Baby aunty and Babychan: two genders in the same hamlet.

By contrast, Sikhs display nominative genius. With divine economy, they give a unisex forename, then add 'Singh' for men and 'Kaur' for women—no identity suspense, just Rolls-Royce precision in a Maruti world. A masterstroke of linguistic engineering where clarity reigns and confusion quietly exits.

In this wild frontier of names, where creativity runs unchecked, the nation now flirts with alphabetic anarchy. One wonders if it is time for a directive, binding naming protocol to tame the chaos unleashed by the simple act of christening a child.

*(The writer is a retired technocrat and freelance writer based in Mumbai)*

## OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

**50 YEARS AGO: DECEMBER 1975**

### Socialist path not given up, asserts PM

Komagata Maru Nagar, December 30
Prime Minister Indira Gandhi today strongly denied allegations that in the economic sphere "there has been a lurch to the Right" and asserted that the Government had been consistently following a policy which many described as "left of the centre." She conceded, however, that because of compulsions of events over which the Government had no control, there might have been slight changes, but the basic policy of helping the poorest and weakest sections of the people remained unchanged.

**25 YEARS AGO: DECEMBER 2000**

### Demolition a mistake: Advani

New Delhi, Dec 30 (UNI)
Home Minister L K Advani tonight said he had 'no doubt' that the demolition of the disputed structure in Ayodhya was 'a terrible mistake' and a failure of leadership on the part of the BJP and the Sangh Parivar. Mr Advani said he had described December 6, 1992, as the "saddest day of my life" in an article in a national news paper a few days after the demolition. He said the RSS had always taught discipline to its members, but this discipline broke down even as he, Ms Uma Bharati, Mr Pramod Mahajan and Mr Ashok Singhal attempted to call upon the workers to desist from their action.

OASIS | NANDKISHORE

# The common ground of peace

Among theists, many argue that if religions unite many, they also divide too many. Therefore, the challenge or task before god-following or god-believing communities, societies, and groups of humanity is to iron out these dividing forces and reiterate uniting forces so that religions keep playing a constructive role so long as these exist in human consciousness.

It is largely accepted by the ones who trust evidentiary yogic experiential methods of self-realisation as well as by the believers who have faith in the existence of God as a separate supreme entity that the existence of divinity or God cannot be proven by human means and mind.

Yet, they agree on this point: that though they may not have seen it yet, there are certain divine qualities which may be verified (perceived) by human reasoning, and it is the presence (perception) of these qualities that gives them succour that the compassionate, loving and merciful divinity must exist.

Omnipresence is that first quality or qualification which makes the existence of divinity credible in the minds of reasoning humanity. Precisely, a reasoning human mind reasons with itself: who is ruling that space with its power where divinity isn't present (doesn't exist)? And, once the human mind is convinced that there can possibly be such a place/space where the sway of the divine doesn't rule, then it won't trust anyone's sermons to believe or trust the existence of any such divine dimension.

Thus omnipresence becomes axiomatic reasonable evidence of divinity in a purely reasoning mind. It is only right reasoning which keeps human minds tilted towards divinity or God. The second qualification can be the assurance of delivery of justice.

A reasoning human mind reasons that if there is no justice in the ultimate run, then the existence of divinity or God doesn't make any sense. Delivering justice is an obvious responsibility of any omnipotent power which is virtuous in nature. Therefore, being judicious becomes another quality of omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent divinity in a right-reasoning human mind.

When the order of divine virtues and values dawns upon in its real order in the human heart/mind/consciousness, none can stay away from the humbling experience of immortal calmness within. Should religions focus on anything other than peacefulness within? Be we theists or atheists, peace is our common love.

## Vande Bharat sleeper train clocks 180 kmph in trials

**NEW DELHI, DHNS:** Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Tuesday took to social media to share a video of a Vande Bharat Sleeper train running at a speed of 180 kmph between Kota-Nagda section while also conducting a "water test".

"Vande Bharat Sleeper tested today by the Commissioner Railway Safety. It ran at 180 kmph between Kota-Nagda section. And our own water test demonstrated the technological features of this new generation train," Vaishnaw wrote in the post on X.

The Minister also shared a video shot from inside the train, showing the speed of the train reaching 182 kmph on a mobile screen, as glasses full of water were stacked on top of each other without spilling, demonstrating the train's stability.

The Vande Bharat trains presently running over the Indian Railway network are semi-high speed train services with a design speed of 180 kmph and maximum operating speed of 160 kmph, according to the government.

## 3% discount on unreserved tickets via RailOne app

**NEW DELHI, DHNS:** The Indian Railways has announced that it will offer a 3% discount on the purchase of unreserved tickets via the RailOne app and payment through any digital mode from January 14 to July 14, 2026.

"In order to proliferate digital booking, it has been decided to provide a discount of 3% while booking unreserved tickets through all digital payment modes on the RailOne app," read a letter from the ministry on Tuesday, addressed to the Centre For Railway Information System (CRIS) for making necessary changes in the software system.

"The proposal of 3% discount shall be in force during the period 14.01.2026 to 14.07.2026. CRIS shall furnish the feedback of this proposal in May for further examination," it added.

The letter also clarified that the existing 3% cashback for bookings through R-wallet on the RailOne app will continue. "However, in the new offer, a 3% discount will be given to the purchasers of unreserved tickets on RailOne through all digital payment modes," an official said, clarifying that this offer is not available on any other online platform.

## PM Modi voices deep concern over targeting of Putin's residence

**NEW DELHI, PTI:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday voiced "deep concern" over the reports of the targeting of the residence of Russian President Vladimir Putin and urged Russia and Ukraine to focus on diplomatic efforts to end hostilities. "Deeply concerned by reports of the targeting of the residence of the President of the Russian Federation," Modi said.

Modi said the ongoing diplomatic efforts offer the most viable path toward ending hostilities and achieving peace.

# A new year, but the same challenges await Congress in 2026

### Leadership tussles, organisational unease and poll setbacks cloud party's road ahead

**SHEMIN JOY**
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Congress is heading to 2026 with the same set of challenges it faced in 2025—from questions over its organisational set up to electoral prospects, diminishing hold on alliance partners and resistance to central leadership's narrative, with a section running their own agenda.

It will also have to deal with the simmering tension in Karnataka, where Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy DK Shivakumar are at loggerheads over a leadership role besides an anticipated fight for a leadership role in poll-bound Kerala, where the party hopes to unseat its national ally CPM.

By the end of 2024, the party had thrown away the political advantage it had gained by reducing the BJP to 240 seats in the Lok Sabha with electoral setbacks in Maharashtra and Haryana, and it could not regain its mojo either in Delhi or in Bihar this year.

Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, KC Venugopal and others during flag-hoisting ceremony marking the 140th Foundation Day of the party. PTI FILE

The central leadership's inability to rein in warring leaders in states is impacting its march, even as the organisational revamp programme made some headway.

The uneasiness over the organisation revamp among a section of leaders was highlighted by Digvijaya Singh first through a tweet and through his intervention at the Congress Working Committee meeting recently.

Bihar polls also raised the question of choice of party's poll and the political narrative centred around 'vote chori', vociferously advocated by Rahul.

While the Congress' official analysis of Bihar results put the blame on 'vote chori' and SIR, a section of leaders argued that jobs and livelihood issues should have been the centre of its campaign.

Rahul faced resistance from a section of leaders over his insistence on Caste Census before the government announced to hold caste count along with the General Census as well as 'vote chori'. The party has also now opened a new front on MGNREGA, but a section of leaders are not convinced.

The elections in five states and union territories also throw a challenge to the Congress.

While it is not the principal player in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, Congress performance in Kerala, Assam and Puducherry will be keenly watched and if it does not manage to win at least one of these, it may trigger another fight between leaders.

Mallikarjun Kharge warned those who think that Congress is 'finished' and said, 'Congress is an ideology and ideologies never die', but it is to be seen how it navigates the choppy waters in 2026.

# SIR a scam being conducted using artificial intelligence: Mamata

### Vows to gherao EC office if legitimate voters removed

BANKURA (WB), PTI

Claiming that the SIR was a huge "scam" being conducted with the help of artificial intelligence (AI), West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday said her TMC will gherao the Election Commission's office in Delhi if the name of a single legitimate voter is deleted from the rolls.

Addressing a rally in Bankura district, Banerjee said people of the state were being "tortured" in the name of SIR.

"Around 60 people have died due to SIR. Elderly people are being summoned for document verification hearings," he claimed.

"If even a single legitimate voter's name is deleted, the TMC will gherao the office of the Election Commission in Delhi," she added.

Banerjee said the people of the state will not tolerate such "harassment". "People will not allow the BJP to come to power in West Bengal," she said.

"Whenever elections come, they promise to build a 'sonar Bangla', but in reality, people who speak Bengali are beaten up in states where the BJP rules," she claimed.

Banerjee alleged that the BJP has stationed its members at the EC's office in Delhi for the SIR exercise.

"They have allegedly used AI to delete 54 lakh names, falsely attributing these actions to EROs. The ERO association has sent letters saying they did not carry out this work," she said.

"If someone's surname is Singh and it's written as Sinha in English, the name is removed. These are the absurdities people are facing. If your name has been removed, fill out forms 7 and 8. This is your right. Do not give up," the West Bengal CM said.

Banerjee also expressed anguish over TMC MP Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar's son being called for the SIR hearing.

She also criticised the EC over booth-level agents of the TMC not being allowed during SIR hearings. "Under which law is this decision being taken?" she asked, adding, "Give us written guidelines. I will approach the court to seek justice."

### TMC group to meet CEC today

**A Trinamool Congress delegation will meet Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar on December 31 to raise concerns about the ongoing Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in West Bengal, the party said on Tuesday.**

People wait for their turn at a centre in central Kolkata during hearings under the Special Intensive Revision of the electoral rolls on Tuesday. PTI

## UP SIR schedule extended again; draft list on Jan 6

**LUCKNOW, PTI:** The Election Commission has revised the schedule for the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Uttar Pradesh, with the draft voter list now slated to be published on January 6, 2026, and the final list on March 6, the state's Chief Electoral Officer Navdeep Rinwa said in a statement on Tuesday.

According to the new schedule, claims and objections will be invited from January 6 to February 6, he said.

Rinwa said the notice stage, disposal of claims and objections, and decisions on enumeration forms will continue from January 6 to February 27, after which the final electoral roll will be published on March 6.

The revision of the schedule comes amid heightened scrutiny of the SIR exercise in the state, where a large-scale pruning of the voter list has been carried out. The nearly 52-day SIR exercise, conducted with the theme 'Shuddh Nirvachak Namavali, Majboot Loktantra' (Clean Electoral Roll, Strong Democracy), began on November 4 and concluded on December 26 after two extensions.

According to official figures, the draft electoral roll is expected to contain around 12.55 crore voters, with about 2.89 crore names deleted from the pre-SIR list for reasons such as death, change of residence or duplication due to enrolment elsewhere. Those excluded will be able to contest the deletion during the claims and objections period.

Rinwa said voters whose names have been deleted can reapply using Form 6, which will also be available for new voters, while objections to the inclusion of names in the draft roll can be filed through Form 7.

He had earlier said that more than 1 crore voters in the draft list fall under the "unmapped" category and will be required to submit self-attested documents prescribed by the Election Commission to retain their names in the final roll.

The SIR exercise and the deletion of names have triggered a political controversy in Uttar Pradesh, with opposition parties alleging bias, a charge rejected by the ruling BJP.

## Congress flags lack of clarity in voter revision process

**NEW DELHI, DHNS:** The Congress on Tuesday questioned the Election Commission (EC) over what it described as "frequent" changes in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, and asked the poll body to publicly clarify whether it is using de-duplication software to identify duplicate voters — a system it had discarded during the Bihar exercise — in the second phase of the revision.

The demand came on a day when West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool supremo Mamata Banerjee alleged at a rally in Bankura that the SIR was a "huge scam" being conducted with the help of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Congress National War Room head and senior MP Sasikanth Senthil alleged that the EC was acting without transparency, adding that its handling of the SIR had become confusing after it abandoned the methodology used during the Bihar revision while carrying out the second phase of the exercise across 12 states and Union Territories.

Senthil said that de-duplication software had earlier been used to identify duplicate voter entries and flag them to field officials. "If a person was found to be registered in more than one booth or district, the software flagged the match, after which the Booth Level Officer (BLO) conducted ground verification to check ordinary residence," he said.

He added that the software was run repeatedly during every annual revision, with the EC sending lists to District Election Officers (DEOs) for re-verification. "The same system was followed even before the Lok Sabha elections in 2023. However, the entire Bihar SIR was carried out without de-duplication software, with the EC claiming that the software was not reliable," he said.

Citing a media report, Senthil said the Bihar voter list still contained around 14.5 lakh duplicate entries. He described the EC's sudden change in stance on a process it had praised until 2023 as "deeply concerning".

## 11 held in Assam, Tripura for links with Bangladeshi extremist groups

**GUWAHATI, PTI:** Eleven people have been arrested in Assam and Tripura for their alleged links with Bangladesh-based fundamentalist groups that were aiming to destabilise the Northeast, police said on Tuesday.

Addressing a press conference, Guwahati Police Commissioner Parthasarathi Mahanta said the Special Task Force (STF) made the arrests based on intelligence inputs provided by central agencies.

"An operation was carried out last night in Barpeta, Chirang, Baksa and Darrang districts of Assam, besides Tripura. We have arrested a total of 11 jihadi elements, who were working under direct orders from Bangladesh-based groups," he said.

Those arrested were members of the Imam Mahmuder Kafila (IMK) module, he said.

"Ten of them were apprehended from Assam, and one from Tripura. Their main aim was to destabilise Assam and the rest of the Northeast. They wanted to establish 'Muslim supremacy' in this part of the country," he claimed.

# Chaudhary begins prep for 2027 polls from West UP

**AMRITA MADHUKALYA**
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Kick-starting preparations for the 2027 Assembly elections, Uttar Pradesh BJP chief Pankaj Chaudhary addressed a meeting in the Mathura region last week.

Calling it Mission 2027, he exhorted party workers to break the 2017 records next year.

The state unit's leaders said Chaudhary started his campaign specifically from the Mathura region in Western UP, so that the work can spread from the east to the west.

Chaudhary started the yatra on Saturday by visiting Mathura, after which he proceeded to the Braj region. On Sunday, he visited Meerut.

Kunwar Basit Ali, the state unit's minority chief, said the Poorvanchal region may be easy for the BJP, but the going will be tough in the western part of the state.

"The region has Muslims in large numbers and there is a significant presence of Yadavs. This means that we have to work doubly hard in Western UP," Basit said.

"He visited Banke Bihari in Mathura and started the UP yatra from the Braj region and reached Meerut via Ghaziabad on the second day, where he was given a rousing welcome. In a way, Pankaj Chaudhary has started the exercise of connecting from East to West UP," a senior party leader said.

The reason, sources said, is that while the party leadership sought to find a balance by appointing Pankaj to the top job, the fact that both he and Yogi Adityanath are from Gorakhpur has not helped matters and Poorvanchal is now seen as a power centre.

Uttar Pradesh BJP chief Pankaj Chaudhary being welcomed by party workers in the Braj region.

### Rift widens over Brahmin MLAs meet

**Within days of UP BJP leadership warning party's Brahmin lawmakers after they held a meeting to discuss what some of them termed 'marginalisation' of the community in the state, the MLA, at whose house the meeting was held, virtually sought to challenge the leadership, saying "Brahmins unite the society and not divide it", reports DHNS from Lucknow. "Wherever the Brahmins gather, there is discussion on knowledge and reason, which strengthens the Hindu identity. Brahmins unite the society and not divide it," BJP MLA Panchananda Pathak said.**

# Govt warns social media platforms over obscene, unlawful content

**AJITH ATHRADY**
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Asking the social media platforms to act against obscene and unlawful content, the Centre has warned them to face action if they fail to follow the direction.

In an advisory, the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) asked social media firms the need for greater consistency in identifying and removing unlawful content.

The Ministry also reminded social media intermediaries that they are statutorily obligated to observe due diligence under the Information Technology Act and the Information Technology Rules.

The advisory follows the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), observing that social media platforms have not been strictly acting on obscene, inappropriate, and unlawful content.

The advisory reminded social media firms of provisions of IT Act and IT Rules 2021 that mandate online platforms to make reasonable efforts to ensure that users of their computer resources do not host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, store, update or share any information that is obscene, pornographic, paedophilic, harmful to children, or otherwise unlawful.

"It is reiterated that non-compliance with the provisions of the IT Act and/or the IT Rules, 2021 may result in consequences, including prosecution under the IT Act, BNS, and other applicable criminal laws, against the intermediaries, platforms and their users," the advisory said.

The advisory also emphasised that large social media platforms are required to deploy technology-based measures to proactively prevent the hosting and dissemination of unlawful content.

The IT Rules 2021 mandate that intermediaries shall remove or disable access to any content that is prima facie in the nature of material depicting an individual in any sexual act or conduct, or any impersonation thereof, within 24 hours of receipt of a complaint.

### CONTENT ADVISORY

- The central government asks platforms to take proactive measures to prevent users from hosting or sharing inappropriate content.
- Says large social media platforms are required to deploy technology-based measures
- Non-compliance may result in consequences, including prosecution

## Govt defends *Battle of Galwan* after China objects to film

**NEW DELHI, PTI:** Cinemas are an artistic expression, and India does not impose restrictions on them, government sources said on Tuesday, after actor Salman Khan's upcoming film "Battle of Galwan" drew attention following the release of its 1.12-minute teaser.

The big-budget drama, based on the 2020 clash between Indian and Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley, has attracted criticism from China's state-run Global Times, which described the film as a cinematic exaggeration and accused it of distorting facts.

The film features Salman Khan portraying Colonel Bikkumalla Santosh Babu, who laid down his life along with 19 other soldiers of the 16 Bihar Regiment while defending Indian territory during the Galwan Valley clash.

"India has a long tradition of cinematic expression. A movie titled *Haqeeqat* was made in 1964 on the 1962 India-China war. Another film, *120 Bahadur*, was recently made on the legendary Battle of Rezang La. Cinema is an artistic expression, and India does not restrict it," a government source said.

The Global Times termed the film propaganda and quoted a "Chinese expert" as well as multiple Weibo (Chinese social media) users to criticise the teaser.

**ENHANCING FIREPOWER**

# India inks Rs 4,666-crore contracts for torpedoes, carbines

**KALYAN RAY**
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Nearly seven years after the first boat was inducted, the Indian Navy's latest Kalvari class submarines are set to receive the heavyweight black shark torpedoes with the Defence Ministry signing a deal on Tuesday with its Italian manufacturer.

The defence ministry signed contracts worth Rs 4,666 crore to procure over 4.25 lakh Close Quarter Battle (CQB) carbines and 48 heavy torpedoes.

"The contract for the procurement and integration of 48 heavyweight torpedoes along with associated equipment for Kalvari class submarines (P-75) at an approximate cost of Rs 1,896 crore was signed with WASS Submarine Systems Italy," the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

The torpedoes will be delivered between April 2028 and early 2030.

The 63m long, fully stealth, wire-guided and self-homing torpedo can be integrated with any type of torpedo tubes.

With these weapons having significant operational capabilities and advanced technological features, the acquisition will enhance the combat capability of the six Kalvari (Scorpene) class submarines.

### CQB carbines

The ministry also inked a deal with Bharat Forge and PLR Systems for the procurement of 4.25 lakh Close Quarter Battle (CQB) carbines along with accessories, worth Rs 2,770 crore, for the army and navy. The contracts were inked in the presence of Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh.

This includes a Rs 1,662 crore contract awarded to Bharat Forge Limited for the supply of 2,55,128 CQB carbines (5.56 x 45 mm) to the army within five years, according to a company statement, while another company, PLR Systems Pvt Ltd, a joint venture between Adani Defence Systems and Israel Weapon Industries, will supply nearly 1.7 lakh carbines.

The CQB carbine provides a critical edge in close combat through its compact design and high rate of fire.

# Maoists ranks thin as over 500 surrendered in 2025: Telangana DGP

## Says internal rifts, sustained pressure from security forces drive cadre to quit insurgency

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

In 2025, a total of 509 underground CPI (Maoist) cadre, including two central committee members, 11 state committee members, three divisional committee secretaries, surrendered before Telangana Police, according to a report released by Telangana DGP B Shivadhar Reddy on Tuesday.

Of the 509 cadre who laid down arms, 483 were from Chhattisgarh, 24 from Telangana, and one each from Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

The report revealed that Maoists from other states are also preferring Telangana for surrender.

Currently, police estimate that 72 underground CPI (Maoist) cadre are natives of Telangana. Of the 12 members in the Maoist central committee, eight hail from Telangana, reflecting the state's historical significance in the leadership structure.

Maoists surrender with weapons before the authorities. PTI FILE

According to police, growing internal dissatisfaction has been evident within the Maoist ranks.

Leaders have allegedly been deploying cadre arbitrarily to distant and unfamiliar areas without their consent — often to regions where they lack both geographical knowledge and local support networks.

These forced relocations have resulted in severe mobility constraints, and shortages of essentials, pushing cadre toward frustration and disillusionment.

Police officials attributed the surge in surrenders to sustained pressure from security forces, erosion of logistical support systems, and decline in local cooperation, all of which have sharply restricted Maoist movement and weakened their operational base.

Further, ideological drift and deepening rifts between the leadership and ground-level cadre, coupled with factionalism and internal disputes, have hastened the organisation's decline.

Harsh living conditions, prolonged separation from families, and diminishing faith in the party's ideology are also prompting members to abandon the armed struggle.

# Former Kerala minister quizzed in Sabarimala gold heist case

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS: Former Kerala devaswom minister and CPI(M) leader Kadakampally Surendran has been questioned by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the alleged gold heist at the Sabarimala Ayyappa temple.

Surendran was reportedly quizzed on Saturday, along with former Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) president P S Prasanth.

Speaking to the media, Surendran said the SIT recorded his statement as he was the devaswom minister at the time of the suspected theft. He reiterated that, as minister, he was not involved in the routine affairs of the temple.

The development is likely to put the ruling CPI(M)-led government in Kerala under pressure. The party has already come under criticism following the arrest of two of its associates — former TDB presidents A Padmakumar and N Vasu.

Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu-based suspected antique smuggler D Mani and his associate Balamurugan were questioned by the SIT after being summoned to Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday. An NRI businessman had earlier informed the SIT about the suspected involvement of Mani, a native of Dindigul, in the Sabarimala gold heist.

The Kerala High Court on Tuesday orally observed that there were allegations of delay in probe. The observation was made while allowing SIT's request to include two additional police officers in the probe.

# Attack on Odisha youth not due to his identity: TN police

CHENNAI, DHNS

Tamil Nadu Police on Tuesday said the brutal attack on a 20-year-old youth from Odisha by four teenagers in Tiruvallur district was not "entirely on account" of him being a North Indian, even as the government reached out to migrant workers saying there has been no violence against people from other states in recent times.

Inspector General of Police (North zone) Asra Garg said the youth, Suraj, has been discharged from the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital here and he has expressed his desire to go back to Odisha. Garg said the youth was not employed anywhere but had been residing in Tamil Nadu for the past two months.

The gory incident caught on a camera – the video clip has gone viral on several social media platforms – was filmed by one of the attackers, while three of them continuously attacked the migrant worker at an abandoned railway quarters in Tiruttani on Saturday and fled from the scene.

Garg said the initial investigation has revealed that an altercation between Suraj and the four teenagers began after they suspected the former of staring at them. "The incident was not entirely on account of him being a North Indian. If that is the case, so many people from other states are staying here," the police officer said, responding to suggestions that he was attacked because he was a "migrant worker."

Admitting that the teenagers might have been under the influence of a drug, the police officer said they have not yet collected evidence on what substance the teenagers consumed when they indulged in the attack.

The government, in a statement said, except for this particular incident, violence against people from other states has not been reported in recent times.

"The atmosphere for the people from other States has been cordial and safe. In order to ensure the safety and security of individuals from other States, adequate Police patrols have been provided in areas of their residence, as well as at their workplaces," the statement said.

# Caretakers starve man to death, disabled daughter rescued in critical state

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

A caretaker couple, allegedly driven by greed for property, is accused of holding a retired Railway employee and his intellectually disabled daughter captive for three years without proper food, resulting in the man's death and leaving the woman severely emaciated.

The incident occurred in Uttar Pradesh's Mahoba district.

According to reports, the man, identified as Om Prakash Rathore, who retired as a clerk with the Railways, died on Monday due to lack of adequate food and care. His daughter, Rashmi, who was reduced to skin and bones, was found lying almost unconscious and naked in the room.

Rathore had been living with his daughter in Mahoba town following his retirement. His wife had died around nine years ago.

He had hired a caretaker couple — Ram Prakash Kushwaha and his wife Ramdevi — to take care of himself and his daughter. It is alleged that the couple gradually took control of the house, confined Rathore and his daughter to a single room and deprived them of proper food.

Reports said the caretaker couple did not allow Rathore's relatives to meet him or his daughter during this period.

Police said they have launched an investigation into the matter and that the autopsy report will determine the exact cause of death. Rashmi has been admitted to a hospital and is undergoing treatment.

# MISCELLANY

## ◆ COMICS ◆

### Blondie

I'VE BEEN THINKING...WE HAVE SMARTPHONES AND SMART TVs, RIGHT?
SURE, ELMO
SO, IF WE'VE ALREADY GOT ALL THIS SMART STUFF, WHO NEEDS SCHOOL?
THERE MIGHT BE JUST A LITTLE BIT LEFT TO LEARN
THAT'S WHAT MY TEACHER SAID

### Hagar The Horrible

SHOULDN'T HAMLET BE HOME FROM SCHOOL BY NOW?
NO, HE'S PARTICIPATING IN AN AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITY!
I DID THAT WHEN I WAS IN SCHOOL AND HATED IT!
THAT WAS DETENTION!

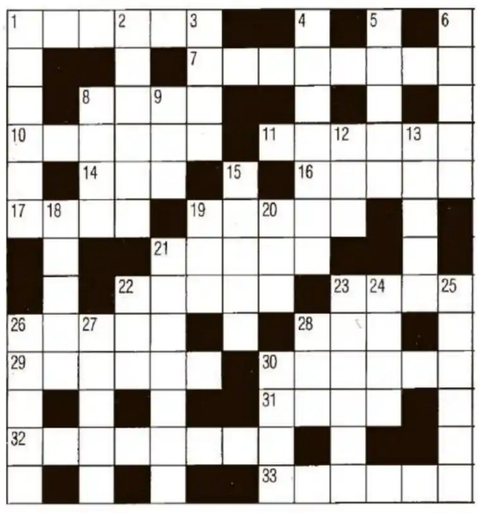
### Beetle Bailey

### Peanuts

WELL, WE LOST AGAIN
LUCY, DO ME A FAVOR...
ASK OUR PLAYERS TO LINE UP TO SHAKE HANDS WITH THE OTHER TEAM AND SAY, "NICE GAME"
OKAY, TEAM, IT'S HYPOCRITE TIME!!

### Marvin

## CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 12321



**CRYPTIC**

**ACROSS**
1 Did better than get selected for England? (6)
7 Make advances to a very quiet swimmer (8)
8 Beastly road users (4)
10 A skeleton in the bathroom! (6)
11 Say how stars are made, out East (6)
14 In a hospital, it's part of the theatre (3)
16 Goes harmoniously as a blend of notes (5)
17 A rotten colour? (4)
19 One in lifelong imprisonment? (5)
21 Something to scale (5)
22 Shot in the heart with anger! (5)
23 Likeliest bets, possibly (4)
26 Biblical character hidden by Amos, especially (5)
28 In short, a sound fascimile (3)
29 Aim to finish with a bit of a sprint (6)
30 Given a deep position in the field, possibly! (6)
31 Opportunity provides one (4)
32 For some, a weighty problem (8)
33 Wisely deceptive about age (6)

**DOWN**
1 Visitor in clear distress about a late start (6)
2 The advantage you get for being in shape (6)
3 Just a quick line (4)
4 City of fashion (7)
5 Received with thanks by Mr Livingstone (5)
6 Slips of girls (5)
8 Posh, maybe, but they cause bitterness (4)
9 In purgatory, it's a weapon (3)
12 The boy in person (3)
13 Concerning a manuscript, you need lots of paper (5)
15 Admitted to be a terrible deed by Charlie (5)
18 Junction with three letters missing! (5)
19 A bit of effort is apt to help (3)
20 Shown the way from Wimbledon (3)
21 I'm wrong, by various means, to make a nominal error (7)
22 A big one can make you feel short of money (3)
23 Fetch out an article for exposing (6)
24 This lets me out (4)
25 Arrange it idly but neatly (6)
26 State the Yankee form of address for a young girl (5)
27 It can spoil satin (5)
28 Fair game? (3)
30 Bunny's listening devices? (4)

**ACROSS**
1 Travelling show (6)
7 Tightrope (4,4)
8 Shade, tint (4)
10 Stopped (6)
11 Long step or pace (6)
14 Favourite (3)
16 Whole range (5)
17 Girl (4)
19 Angry, excited (3,2)
21 Don (3,2)
22 Fabric type (5)
23 Swift (4)
26 Of sound (5)
28 Small bread roll (3)
29 Mischievous jokes (6)
30 Teachers (6)
31 Norse god (4)
32 Class or division (8)
33 Stinks (6)

**DOWN**
1 Call off (6)
2 Shuts (6)
3 Cast off (4)
4 Shoulder firearm (7)
5 Note value (5)
6 Brimless cap (5)
8 Faucets (4)
9 Catch fish in this (3)
12 Knock (3)
13 Hoodwinks (5)
15 Allow to enter (3,2)
18 Thespian (5)
19 Cabin (3)
20 Unit of weight (3)
21 Parcel (7)
22 Transgression (3)
23 Unsuccessful, pointless (6)
24 Soon (4)
25 Chucks (6)
26 Nutmeg, say (5)
27 Unpleasant (5)
28 Unopened flower (3)
30 Playthings (4)

**SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 12320**

**CRYPTIC**
**ACROSS:** 1, B-less 6, Poppy 9, Cart-O-on 10, Fair(L)y 11, Suite 12, Glass 13, T-Ena-ble 15, Sot 17, Adam 18, Smelly 19, Areas 20, Treat-y 22, Ante 24, So-s 25, Star-Ted 26, Do-L-ts 27, Strip 28, Jemmy 29, Sharpen 30, PR-icy 31, T-'em-po.
**DOWN:** 2, Loaded 3, Scream 4, Say 5, Stole 6, Possums 7, O-nus 8, Petrol 12, Glory (be) 13, Tarts 14, Names 15, Slant 16, Typed 18, Salts 19, A-trophy 21, Rotter 22, Arsene 23, Team up 25, Stork 26, D-is-C 28, Jet.

**EASY**
**ACROSS:** 1, Abuse 6, Soars 9, Lay open 10, Ingot 11, Lungs 12, Riles 13, Malaria 15, Foe 17, Amen 18, String 19, Cedes 20, Crocus 22, Erse 24, Hen 25, Segment 26, Susan 27, Fatal 28, Wasps 29, Musical 30, Flees 31, Smart.
**DOWN:** 2, Bantam 3, Slogan 4, Eat 5, Sofia 6, Selects 7, Onus 8, Region 12, Rises 13, Match 14, Lemon 15, Fibre 16, Egret 18, Seven 19, Cumulus 21, Recall 22, Embalm 23, Sniper 25, Sapid 26, Same 28, Was.

## ◆SU-DO-KU-6791◆

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | | 4 | | | 6 | | | |
| | | 9 | 2 | | | | | |
| | 2 | 8 | | 7 | 3 | | | |
| 8 | | | | | | 9 | | 2 |
| | | 7 | 8 | | 4 | 1 | | |
| 9 | | 3 | | | | | | 4 |
| | | | 7 | 3 | | 6 | 4 | |
| | | | | | 5 | 3 | | |
| | | | 6 | | | 8 | | 9 |

medium

**SOLUTION TO 6790**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 7 |
| 9 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 8 |
| 2 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 5 | 4 |
| 1 | 9 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 3 |
| 4 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 1 |
| 5 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 8 | 2 |
| 7 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| 8 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 6 |
| 6 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 9 |

**To solve the puzzle:** To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

## SCRABBLE™

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| R1 R1 G2 S1 B3 A1 A1 | 1st Letter Double | RACK 1 |
| D2 R1 M3 A1 A1 I1 Y4 | Double Word Score | RACK 2 |
| F4 S1 F4 O1 O1 C3 C3 | Triple Word Score | RACK 3 |
| L1 L1 I1 L1 G2 E1 A1 | | RACK 4 |

PAR SCORE 85-95
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

**YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION**

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A1 | V4 | O1 | C3 | A1 | D2 | O1 | RACK 1 = 71 |
| W4 | E1 | L1 | D2 | I1 | N1 | G2 | RACK 2 = 62 |
| A1 | N1 | T1 | E1 | N1 | N1 | A1 | RACK 3 = 64 |
| S1 | M3 | I1 | R1 | K5 | Y4 | | RACK 4 = 45 |

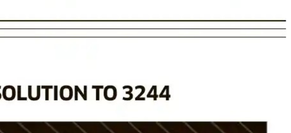
PAR SCORE 160-170 JUDD'S TOTAL 242

## JUMBLE®

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

UCIEJ
PCIYS
AMLERV
ODNBYO


I'm thinking graphic design is what I want to study.
I'm sure whatever subject you choose will be right for you.
Then let's make sure you pick the right college for that field.
6/21
CHOOSING WHAT TO STUDY IN COLLEGE TO GRADUATE WITH A DEGREE CAN BE A ---

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: FISHY DRAFT SINFUL CLEVER
Answer: The injury he received while making the bookcase was — "SHELF"-INFLICTED

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## HITORI-3245

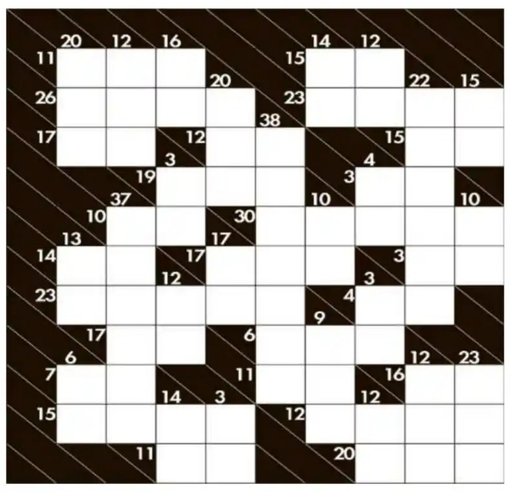
| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 5 |
| 3 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 1 |
| 2 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 8 |
| 7 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 4 |
| 7 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 6 |
| 4 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 5 |
| 2 | 3 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 5 |

**SOLUTION TO 3244**

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | ■ | 6 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 3 | ■ |
| 1 | 6 | ■ | 7 | ■ | 2 | ■ | 3 |
| ■ | 4 | 3 | ■ | 6 | 8 | 2 | 1 |
| 6 | ■ | 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 | ■ | 8 |
| 5 | 8 | ■ | 4 | ■ | 3 | 1 | ■ |
| ■ | 5 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 6 | ■ | 2 |
| 4 | 3 | 8 | 2 | ■ | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| 7 | ■ | 4 | 6 | 2 | ■ | 5 | ■ |

**To solve the puzzle:** Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

## KAKURO- 3245



**SOLUTION TO 3244**

**To solve the puzzle:** Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

## SU DO KU X - 3782

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ | | | | 3 | | 9 | | ■ |
| | ■ | | | | | | ■ | |
| 9 | | ■ | | | | ■ | | 8 |
| | 3 | | 2 | | ■ | | | |
| | | 2 | | ■ | | | | 1 |
| 4 | 8 | 9 | ■ | 6 | ■ | | 5 | 3 |
| | 5 | ■ | | | | ■ | | |
| 8 | ■ | | | | | 1 | 7 | |
| 6 | 2 | | | | | | | ■ |

**SOLUTION TO 3781**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 8 | 4 |
| 1 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 7 |
| 9 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 2 |
| 5 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 6 |
| 6 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 1 | 3 |
| 8 | 9 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 5 |
| 7 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 8 |
| 4 | 2 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 1 |
| 3 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 9 |

**To solve the puzzle:** The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

## India-Pakistan tensions among issues we 'mediated': China

**BEIJING, PTI:** Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Tuesday said "tensions between India and Pakistan" were among the list of hotspot issues "mediated" by China this year.

New Delhi has been maintaining that the May 7-10 conflict between India and Pakistan was resolved through direct talks between the DGMOs (Director General of Military Operations) of the armies of the two countries.

At the May 13 press briefing, the Ministry of External Affairs had said, "regarding ceasefire and what sort of role other countries played, etc. See, the specific date, time and wording of the understanding was worked out between the DGMOs of the two countries at their phone call on 10th May 2025, commencing at 15:35 hours."

India has also been consistently maintaining that there is no place for any third-party intervention in matters relating to India and Pakistan. "This year, local wars and cross-border conflicts flared up more often than at any time since the end of WWII. Geopolitical turbulence continued to spread", Wang said.

# Khaleda Zia shaped Bangladesh politics through decades of turmoil

**The three-time PM was engaged in bitter contest with Sheikh Hasina**

DHAKA, PTI

Khaleda Zia, Bangladesh's first woman prime minister and the second in the Muslim world, dominated the country's politics for decades alongside her arch-rival Sheikh Hasina.

Zia, the long-time chief of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and a three-time prime minister, died early Tuesday in Dhaka after a prolonged illness. She was 80.

She was admired by her supporters for her role in restoring democracy following years of military and quasi-military rule that began in 1975.

Zia remained a central figure in Bangladesh's politics through the 1990s and into the early 2000s.

Her political career, spanning more than four decades, was marked by dramatic highs and lows — from leading a major party and governing the country to being convicted in corruption cases and later receiving a presidential pardon.

Zia's rise as a public figure is widely regarded as accidental. A decade after being widowed at the age of 35, she assumed the office of prime minister, though her entry into politics had not been planned.

She was largely unfamiliar with the political world until she was drawn into it following the assassination of her husband, President Ziaur Rahman in an abortive army coup on May 30, 1981. She quickly emerged as the top leader of the BNP, the party founded by her husband in 1978. She was enrolled as a primary member of the BNP on January 3, 1982.

By March the following year, she became the party's vice-president, and in May 1984, its chairperson — a position she held until her death. Her principal rival throughout this period was Sheikh Hasina, chief of the Awami League.

Following the 1982 military coup led by then Army chief Gen HM Ershad, Zia launched a movement to restore democracy. After the fall of the Ershad regime in December 1990, a caretaker government headed by Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed conducted elections in February 1991.

The BNP emerged with a majority, surprising many who had expected an Awami League victory. Parliament subsequently amended the Constitution, restoring the parliamentary system in place of the presidential one. Zia became Bangladesh's first woman prime minister and the second in the Muslim world, after Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto.

### POLITICAL MILESTONES

- **1981** Enters politics after the assassination of her husband, President Ziaur Rahman. She was just 36 years old.
- **1991** Wins landmark election; becomes Bangladesh's first female prime minister.
- **1996** Loses power to Sheikh Hasina.
- **2001** Returns to office with a landslide victory.
- **2006** Leaves power amid unrest; army-backed interim government takes over.
- **December 30, 2025:** **Dies at 80** after a long illness.
- **2018** Jailed in corruption case; later placed under house arrest.
- **Aug 2024** Freed after Sheikh Hasina is ousted.
- **Early 2025** Acquitted by the Supreme Court.

### India-B'desh ties under her tenures were 'complex'

**NEW DELHI, PTI:** Bangladesh's former prime minister Khaleda Zia's rise had symbolised the country's "resilience" in reclaiming democracy after turbulent military rule, and she also strengthened the BNP, which was in "great danger" of being totally fractured after her husband's death, according to two former envoys of India.

They also said that India-Bangladesh relations under Zia's tenures were "complex" and "often strained" due to alleged support for insurgents in the Northeast and their sheltering in Bangladesh.

Zia, 80, who died in Dhaka on Tuesday after a prolonged illness, was Bangladesh's first woman prime minister and dominated the country's politics for decades.

Veteran diplomat Veena Sikri, who served as India's high commissioner in Dhaka from 2003-2006, said during Zia's second tenure (2001-2006), it was a "very difficult time as the influence of Pakistan was very big".

## WORLD AT A GLANCE

Hollywood star George Clooney and his wife, Amal Clooney, along with their two children, have obtained French citizenship. Clooney said it was essential for the family to live in a place where their children could have a chance at a normal life. REUTERS FILE

### Myanmar's military-backed party claims strong lead in first phase

▸ The political party backed by Myanmar's ruling military claimed on Tuesday it won a commanding lead in the initial round of the first general election in five years, even though the state election body has not named the winners, AP/PTI reports from Bangkok.

Voting is taking place in three phases due to ongoing armed conflicts, with the first round held on Sunday in 102 of Myanmar's 330 townships. The remaining phases will take place on January 11 and January 25, but 65 townships won't participate because of the fighting. A senior official of the Union Solidarity and Development Party told The Associated Press that the party has won 88 of the total 102 lower house seats contested in the first phase. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to release information. Myanmar has a two-house national legislature, totalling 664 seats. The party with a combined parliamentary majority can select the new president, who can name a Cabinet and form a new government.

### US strikes alleged drug boat again

▸ The US military said Monday that it had conducted another strike against a boat accused of smuggling drugs in the eastern Pacific Ocean, killing two people, AP/PTI reports from Washington.

The strike, which was announced by US Southern Command on social media, has brought the total number of known boat strikes to 30 and the number of people killed at least 107 since early September, according to numbers announced by the Trump administration. The United States military said the vessel "was engaged in narco-trafficking operations," though it did not provide evidence to back up the claim. In a video of the strike posted to social media, a boat is seen moving through water before being struck by two explosions.

A passenger carries a suitcase, after a Eurostar suspended its cross-Channel train services to and from London over power supply problem, in London on Tuesday. REUTERS

### 41 men die from circumcision

▸ At least 41 young men have died as a result of circumcision procedures as part of traditional initiation activities in South Africa in November and December, AP/PTI reports from Johannesburg.

Traditional initiation is a rite of passage into manhood for young men that is practised annually by various ethnic groups in Africa, including parts of South Africa. Among them are the Xhosa, Ndebele, Sotho and Venda communities. Traditionally, young men are isolated at initiation schools where they are taught cultural values and responsibilities as they become adults. The circumcision part of the initiation results every year in the deaths of some initiates, forcing the government to intervene through legislation.

### China flexes might near Taiwan

▸ China's People's Liberation Army staged a second day of large-scale military drills around Taiwan on Tuesday, unleashing a live-fire show of force as part of what it called "Justice Mission 2025" to demonstrate its ability to deter any external armed support for the self-ruled island, AP/PTI reports from Hong Kong.

The PLA's Eastern Theatre Command sent destroyers, frigates, fighters and bombers to the waters to the north and south of the island to test its ability in sea-air coordination and blockading. Its ground forces carried out long-range, live-fire drills in the waters to the island's north, and achieved what command spokesperson Li Xi called "desired effects". Taiwan's Civil Aviation Administration was notified that seven temporary "dangerous zones" had been set up around the strait, affecting international and domestic air travellers. It was not immediately clear whether that involved flight cancellations.

A military equipment of Chinese ground forces takes part in long-range live-fire drills targeting waters north of Taiwan on Tuesday. REUTERS

# Trump warns Iran of possible strike

PALM BEACH, AP/PTI

President Donald Trump warned Iran against reconstituting its nuclear program Monday as he welcomed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to his home in Florida for wide-ranging talks.

The warning comes after Trump has insisted that Tehran's nuclear capabilities were "completely and fully obliterated" by US strikes on key nuclear enrichment sites in June. But Israeli officials have been quoted in local media expressing concern about Iran rebuilding its supply of long-range missiles capable of striking Israel.

"Now I hear that Iran is trying to build up again," Trump told reporters soon after Netanyahu arrived at his Mar-a-Lago estate. "And if they are, we're going to have to knock them down. We'll knock them down. We'll knock the hell out of them. But hopefully that's not happening."

Iran has insisted that it is no longer enriching uranium at any site in the country, trying to signal to the West that it remains open to potential negotiations over its atomic program. But Netanyahu was expected to discuss with Trump the need to potentially take new military action against Tehran just months after launching a 12-day war on Iran. Trump criticized Iran anew for not making a deal to completely disarm its nuclear program ahead of the US and Israeli strikes earlier this year.

Netanyahu's visit also comes at another critical moment in Gaza as Trump looks to create fresh momentum for the Israel-Hamas ceasefire that is in danger of stalling before reaching the complicated second phase of the agreement.

**MASOUD PEZESHKIAN**
Iranian president

"Answer of Islamic Republic of Iran to any cruel aggression will be harsh and discouraging

# Iranian students join stir over economic crisis

**Government offers dialogue as protests spread to universities**

TEHRAN, AFP

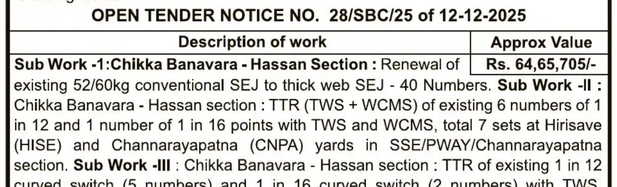
Iranian students staged street protests in Tehran on Tuesday, a day after the capital's shopkeepers demonstrated against economic hardship and won a message of understanding from the president.

According to Ilna, a news agency associated with Iran's labour movement, protests erupted at seven Tehran universities that are among the country's most prestigious, and at the technology university in the central city of Isfahan.

The student action came after Monday's protests in central Tehran by shop-owners and a day ahead of the temporary closure of banks, schools and businesses in the capital and in most provinces to save energy during the bitterly cold weather. The Iranian rial has dropped against the dollar and other world currencies — when the protests erupted on Sunday, the US dollar was trading at around 1.42 million rials, compared to 820,000 rials a year ago — forcing up import prices and hurting retail traders.

AFP saw a large police and security presence deployed at major intersections in central Tehran and around certain universities on Tuesday, while some of the shops closed the previous day in the capital's centre had reopened. Spontaneous demonstrations erupted on Sunday at the city's largest mobile phone market, before gaining momentum, though they remained limited in number and confined to central Tehran. The vast majority of shops elsewhere continued to operate as usual.

President Masoud Pezeshkian met with labour leaders and made proposals to tackle the economic crisis. "I have asked the interior minister to listen to the legitimate demands of the protesters by engaging in dialogue," he said.



People walk past closed shops during a strike called by shopkeepers and students in Tehran on Tuesday. REUTERS

## Saudi Arabia bombs Yemen port after warning UAE

**DUBAI, AP/PTI:** Saudi Arabia bombed Yemen's port city of Mukalla on Tuesday after a weapons shipment from the United Arab Emirates arrived for separatist forces in the war-torn country, and warned that it viewed Emirati actions as "extremely dangerous."

The bombing followed days of tensions over the advance of the separatist forces known as the Southern Transitional Council, which are backed by the Emirates.

### UAE to pull troops

Later in the day, UAE said it was pulling its remaining forces out of Yemen, following a Saudi demand to withdraw within 24 hours as tensions escalate over a sweeping offensive by Abu Dhabi-backed separatists.

The UAE's defence ministry said it was withdrawing "counter-terrorism teams... of its own volition". Abu Dhabi had denied being behind the separatists' advance.

Yemen's presidential council and Saudi Arabia had demanded Emirati troops pull out.

## Israel to halt operations of some aid groups in Gaza

**JERUSALEM, AP/PTI:** Israel on Tuesday said it will suspend more than two dozen humanitarian organisations, including Doctors Without Borders, for failing to meet its new rules to vet international organisations working in the Gaza Strip.

The Ministry of Diaspora Affairs said that the organisations facing bans on January 1 didn't meet new requirements for sharing staff, funding and operations information.

It accused Doctors Without Borders, one of the largest health organisations operating in Gaza, of failing to clarify the roles of some staff that Israel accused of cooperation with Hamas and other militant groups.

International organisations have said that Israel's rules are arbitrary and could endanger staff. The ministry said that around 25 organisations, or 15 per cent, of nongovernmental organisations working in Gaza didn't have their permits renewed.

Doctors Without Borders, also known by its French acronym MSF, didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. Israel previously accused its staff of involvement in military activities in Gaza in 2024.


**PUBLIC NOTICE**

NOTICE is hereby given that, we are investigating the title of Bharat Fritz Werner Limited, having its registered office at Plot No 50B, Peenya 2nd Phase, Industrial Area, Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore-560058, to the property which is more fully described in the Schedule hereunder (**"Schedule Property"**).

Any person having any subsisting claim, right, title or interest, in respect of the Schedule Property or any part thereof, in any manner including by way of sale, transfer, assignment, exchange, charge, tenancy, sub-tenancy, lease, sub-lease, license, mortgage, inheritance, share, gift, devise, lien, maintenance, easement, encumbrance, trust, covenant, possession, beneficial interest or pre-emption or under any agreement or other disposition or under any suit or award passed by any Court or Authority, arbitrator, *lis-pendens*, power of attorney, bequest, FSI, development rights, partnership, family arrangement or settlement or otherwise encumbrance of any nature howsoever ("Claim"), are hereby requested to respond with documentary proof to the undersigned within 15 (Fifteen) days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which, it shall be presumed that no such Claim exists and if it existed, the claimant has relinquished such Claim and/or waived their right to exercise such Claim.

**SCHEDULE PROPERTY**

All that piece and parcel of immovable property being converted land measuring 8,12,393 square feet (equivalent to 18 acres 26 guntas) along with factory buildings constructed thereon, bearing EPID No 4126542357, in Ward No 16 - Jalahalli, formed in Survey No 49, situated at Peenya Village, Yashwanthpura Hobli, Bengaluru Taluk and bounded as follows:

East By : Pipeline Road;
West By : Private Property;
North By : Private Property; and
South By : Road

Dated : 31/12 /2025
Place : Bengaluru

**Pavithra Thammaiah Khaitan & Co LLP**
Embassy Quest, 3rd Floor
45/1, Magrath Road
Bengaluru - 560 025
T: +91 80 4339 7000



**S. E. RAILWAY – TENDER**

For and on behalf of President of India, the Chief Engineer (con)/II/GRC S. E. Railway, Garden Reach invites e-tender for the following works. Following tender has been uploaded on website **www.ireps.gov.in.** The tender will be closed at 12:00 hrs. on due date : **e-Tender Notice No. : 4562-GRC-CE-C-II-18-2025; Brief Description of Works :** Composite work for Extension of covered ROH shed and Sick line shed and construction of new service building with renovation of power supply arrangements including provision and commissioning of all Civil, Electrical, Mechanical, Telecom works for ROH shed Adityapur (Jharkhand) South Eastern Railway under jurisdiction of Dy. CE(Con)/Tatanagar; **Approx Cost:** ₹ 25.16 Crore; **Bid Security:** ₹ 14,08,000.00; **Completion period:** 24 months; **Closing Date :** 22.01.2026. Interested tenderers may visit website **www.ireps.gov.in** for full details/description/specification of the tenders and submit their bids online. In no case manual tenders for these items will be accepted. **NB:** "Prospective Bidders may regularly visit **www.ireps.gov.in** to participate in all other tenders." **(PR-1017)**



**SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY**

**Publication of E-Tender**
**Notice No. E-GSU-ELE-2025-26-OT-6 dated 24.12.2025**

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tender for the following work.

| Sl.No. | Item of Work | Approx.Value |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | OHE Modification Works in connection with the Proposed shifting of Points and Crossings at Bengaluru Cantonment Yard. | Rs. 1,55,30,559.48/- |

Last date for Submission of bids :
**Upto 11.00 hrs on 15.01.2026**
For details log on : **www.ireps.gov.in**
**Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer, Gati Shakti Unit, Bengaluru**
**PUB/784/AAD360/PRB/SWR/2025-26**
Download the **UTS** Moblie App from **Google Play Store** for ease of booking of unreserved tickets
South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | @SWRAILWAYHQ | @sw_railways



**SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY**

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following works:

**OPEN TENDER NOTICE NO. 28/SBC/25 of 12-12-2025**

| Description of work | Approx Value |
|---|---|
| **Sub Work -I:Chikka Banavara - Hassan Section :** Renewal of existing 52/60kg conventional SEJ to thick web SEJ - 40 Numbers. **Sub Work -II :** Chikka Banavara - Hassan section : TTR (TWS + WCMS) of existing 6 numbers of 1 in 12 and 1 number of 1 in 16 points with TWS and WCMS, total 7 sets at Hirisave (HISE) and Channarayapatna (CNPA) yards in SSE/PWAY/Channarayapatna section. **Sub Work -III** : Chikka Banavara - Hassan section : TTR of existing 1 in 12 curved switch (5 numbers) and 1 in 16 curved switch (2 numbers) with TWS, weldable CMS xing, total 7 sets at Nelamangala (NMGA) and Solur (SOLR) yards in SSE/PWAY/Kunigal section | **Rs. 64,65,705/-** |

Last date for submission of bids:**Upto 15:00 Hrs. on 05-01-2026**

**OPEN TENDER NOTICE NO. 29/SBC/25 of 17-12-2025**

| Sl. | Description of work | Approx Value |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Bengaluru - Salem Section :** Improvements to drainage arrangements to RUB No. 409/A at km 158/300-400 near Hosur station yard in Assistant Divisional Engineer /Dharmapuri section. | **Rs. 1,45,73,488/-** |
| 2 | **Bengaluru - Salem Section :** Improvements to 18 RUBs vide RUB No. 29/A, 31/A, 31/B, 32/A, 35/A, 37/A, 39/A, 39/B, 59/A, 45/A, 178/A, 183/A, 185/A, 187/A, 224/A, 259/A, 475/A and 498/A in Assistant Divisional Engineer/Dharmapuri section. | **Rs. 2,30,75,860/-** |
| 3 | **Bengaluru - Salem section** : Construction of staff quarters on replacement basis of Type-II quarters 5 units and Type-III quarters 01 unit in lieu of 2/A, B, C and 5/A, B at Thoppur (TPP) station, including electrical portions. Maintenance period is 12 months. | **Rs. 1,91,34,351/-** |
| 4 | **Bengaluru - Salem section : Sub Work - I :** Construction of staff quarters on replacement basis of Type-II quarters 4 units and type-III quarters 01 unit in lieu of 4/A, B, C and 16/A, B at Rayakkottai (RYC) station under Assistant Divisional Engineer/Dharmapuri subdivision, including electrical portions. **Sub Work - II:** : Construction of staff quarters on replacement basis of Type-II quarters 2 units in lieu of 3/A, B at Marandahalli (MZU) station under Assistant Divisional Engineer/Dharmapuri sub-division, including electrical portions | **Rs. 2,24,30,786/-** |
| 5 | Senior Divisional Engineer/North/Bengaluru and Divisional Engineer/South/ Bengaluru Section : Manufacturing, supply of 52 kg/60 kg/60 EI-R260 AT welding portions including IN-SITU welding in connection with the works pertaining to Senior Divisional Engineer/North/Bengaluru and Divisional Engineer/South/ Bengaluru Section. | **Rs. 79,88,245/-** |
| 6 | **Sub Work - I: Penukonda - Dharmavaram section**: Complete Track Renewal (Primary) for a length of 0.6 kms from 0/000 to 0/600 at Penukonda yard Road - 1 (SSPN Line) and Through Turnout Renewal (Primary) of point number - 62A at Penukonda yard between km 0/180-0/240 (1 set) in SSE/PWAY/Penukonda section. **Sub Work - II:** Bengaluru - Dharmavaram section : Through fittings renewal for a length of 15.4 km from km 56/700 to 72/100 DN line in SSE/PWAY/Hindupur section. **Sub Work - III:** : Yelahanka - Chintamani section : Replacement of over aged 52kg SEJ with PSC improved SEJ - 18 numbers in SSE/PWAY/Yelahanka section. | **Rs. 57,52,797/-** |

Last date for submission of bids:**Upto 15:00 Hrs. on 14-01-2026**

**For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in**

**Senior Divisional Engineer /Co-Ordination Bengaluru**
PUB/761/AAF/PRB/SWR/2025-26

Download the UTS Mobile App from Google Play Store for ease of booking of unreserved tickets
South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRAILWAYHQ | sw_railways



**SOUTHERN RAILWAY**

**TENDER NOTICE**

E-Tenders are Invited by the Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer, Southern Railway, Salem Division, Salem - 636 005 for the following work.

| SL. NO. | DESCRIPTION | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Tender Notice Number and date | **GEM / 2025 / B / 7045337 dated 26.12.2025** |
| 2 | Name of Work | Outcome based Comprehensive Cleaning Contract at Erode Railway Colony Inclusive of garbage disposal for a period of two years excluding Sundays. |
| 3 | Estimate Value | **₹2,54,29,637/-** |
| 4 | Earnest Money | **₹2,77,200/-** |
| 5 | Tender Closing Date and Time | **16.01.2026 at 14:00 Hrs.** |
| 6 | Web Address | **http://www.gem.gov.in** |

The firms registered in GeM portal are only eligible to participate in this tender.
For details of bid submission, please refer website portal **"http://www.gem.gov.in"**.
For details about scope of work, approximate value of tender, location and other documents, please refer website portal **"http://www.gem.gov.in"**.
**Note: It is the responsibility of the tenderers to check any Corrigendum is issued for any correction; deletion or modifications uploaded subsequently in the website and the same shall be taken into account while uploading the tender. For further details please visit website at "http://www.gem.gov.in".**

**Place: Salem** **Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer**
**Date: 26.12.2025** **Southern Railway, Salem-636 005**

## MCA extends deadline to Jan 31 for filing fin statements

**NEW DELHI, PTI:** The corporate affairs ministry on Tuesday extended the deadline for filing of financial statements and annual returns under the companies law till January 31, 2026.

The extension of the deadline, which was to initially end on December 31, comes against the backdrop of representations from various stakeholders. Many of them were facing issues with the filing system.

These filings are for the financial year 2024-25.

"...in view of the representations received from stakeholders, the competent authority has decided to allow companies to complete their annual filings [e-Forms MGT7, MGT-7A, AOC-4, AOC-4 CFS, AOC-4 NBFC (Ind AS), AOC-4 CFS NBFC (Ind AS), AOC4 (XBRL)] pertaining to FY 2024-25 up to 31st January, 2026 without payment of additional fees," the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) said on Tuesday.

In a post on X, MCA said relaxation of additional fees and extension of time for filing of financial statements and annual returns for 2024-25 under the Companies Act, 2013 has been given.

## Infosys gets Rs 7.49 crore penalty

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** IT services major Infosys has received penalty orders worth Rs 7.49 crore from the Deputy Commissioner of Commercial taxes. In a regulatory filing, the company said, "Demand issued alleged nonrealisation/delay in realisation of export proceeds, availment of ineligible ITC (Input tax credit) and other issues like RCM, import of services, sale of investments, staff welfare expense and write off cases of exports for the FY 2021-22."

It added in the filing that there is no material impact on financials, operations or other activities of the company.

# Rich exits to investors: 42 tech cos went public in 2025

### Of these, 7 startups are from Bengaluru

**UMA KANNAN**
BENGALURU, DHNS

Tech companies have recorded 42 IPOs in 2025, a 17% increase over 36 IPOs in 2024, and a 62% rise compared to 26 IPOs in 2023, according to data from Tracxn.

Of this, new-age companies led the charge with 18 startups making their debut on the exchanges in 2025, making many early-stage investors rich. According to brokerage firm Angel One, 18 new-age tech startups raised Rs 41,283 crore through IPOs this year.

Among these companies, seven startups are from Bengaluru including Meesho, Ather Energy, BlueStone, Capillary Technologies, Groww, Indiqube, and Wakefit. Aequs is also based out of Karnataka.

Major IPOs that got listed during the year included Meesho, Aequs, Lenskart, Ather Energy, Pine Labs, and PhysicsWallah, among others. While Urban Company saw over 60% listing gains, Meesho and PhysicsWallah witnessed 46% and 42.4% listing gains, respectively.

While the average years for these 42 tech companies to reach IPO from their first funding was 13.9, it was 9.2 in 2024. Also, the average IPO Mcap stood at $731 million, compared to $578 million in the previous year. With 10 exits, Peak XV Partners was the top investor (BlueStone), followed by Trifecta Capital with seven exits (notable exit includes Urban Company).

Inflection Point Ventures Co-Founder Ankur Mittal said 2025 has been a defining year for the startup ecosystem of India. While earlier years were about nurturing unicorns, the focus of 2025 was on realising meaningful IPOs.

"These IPOs have yielded tremendous returns for early-stage investors and early backers of young startups. These returns to early-stage investors have brought the limelight to angel investing and have inspired more people to evaluate and invest in startups and a brilliant cycle is thus created. The momentum for the years ahead is clearly building," he said.

Recently, J P Morgan said annual IPOs worth around $20 billion have become the country's new normal. In September this year alone, 25 companies got listed.

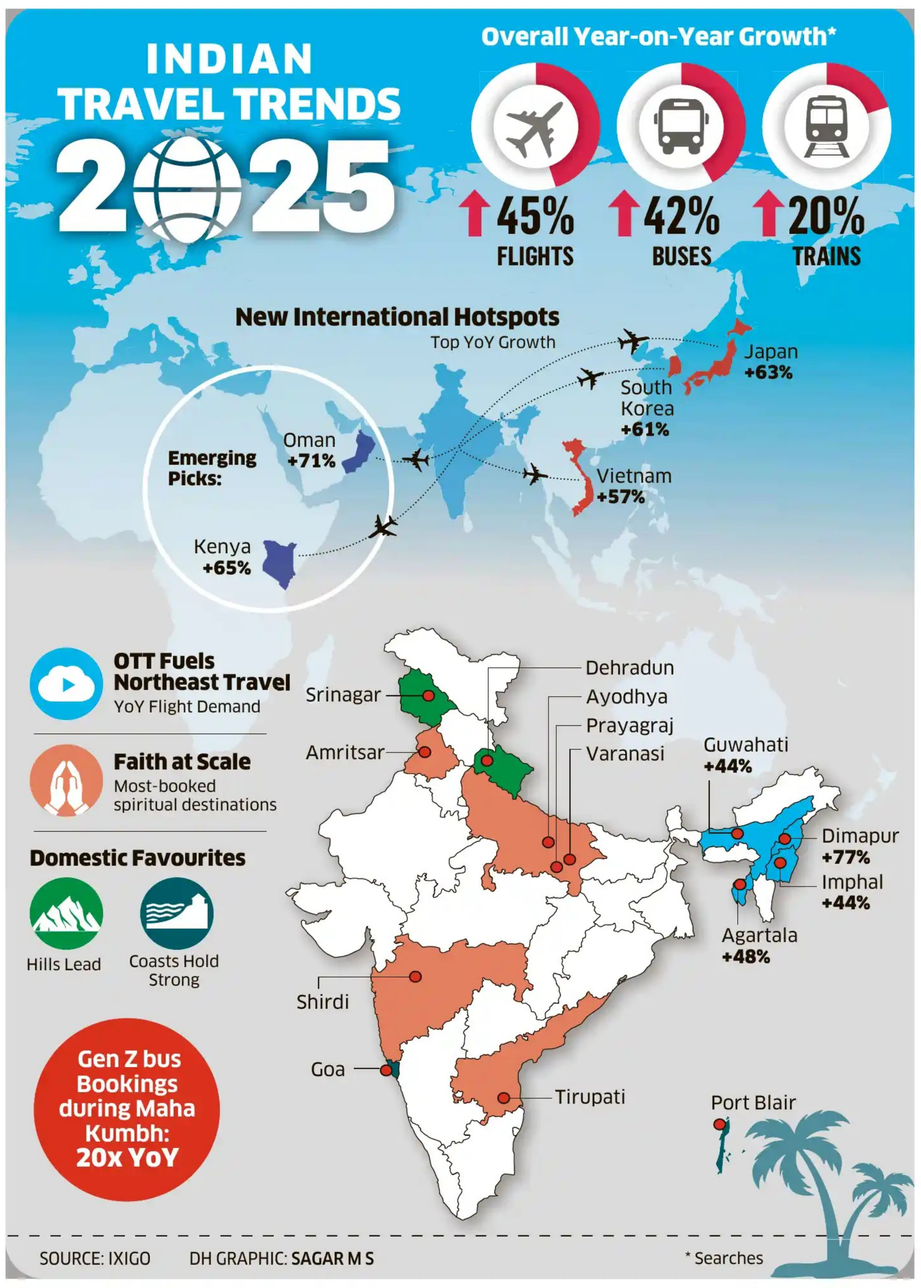
According to Sattva Ventures Founder Adrija Aggarwal, the market is currently seeing competition for capital, as big public listings (IPOs) pull institutional money away from private startups. To keep the ecosystem moving, secondary markets have become essential, allowing older investors to sell their stakes and reinvest that cash into newer companies.

Already, at least 20 startups have lined up for listing next year, and this includes Kuku FM, Navi, and InMobi.

Assiduus Global Founder and CEO Somdutta Singh said more Indian startups listing in 2025 matters for reasons that go far beyond market sentiment. For founders, an IPO is a structural shift in how the company is built and operated. Once listed, the business is no longer evaluated on ambition or future narratives. "It is judged on the consistency of execution, the quality of cash flows, and the ability to manage risk in full public view. One change that is often underestimated is how sharply the cost of capital comes into focus. In private markets, capital is raised episodically and largely on expectation. In public markets, capital is priced daily. Missed guidance, weak working capital controls, or operational surprises show up immediately in valuation. This forces tighter discipline on margins, capital allocation, and the true sustainability of growth," the serial entrepreneur said.

The 2025 IPO cohort is also notable because many companies are entering the market after years of learning hard lessons around governance, compliance, and financial controls.

"These are not cosmetic changes made for listing. They fundamentally alter decision-making, accountability, and how risk is absorbed across the organisation. This maturity is critical as companies scale across geographies, regulations, and complex supply chains," she added.




# India overtakes Japan to become 4th largest economy

### Inflation declines from 4.26% in Jan 2025, to 0.71% in Nov

**GYANENDRA KESHRI**
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Despite high US tariffs and other global headwinds, the Indian economy performed better than expected in 2025, beating all major projections on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth and inflation, and achieved a significant milestone to become the fourth largest economy, surpassing Japan.

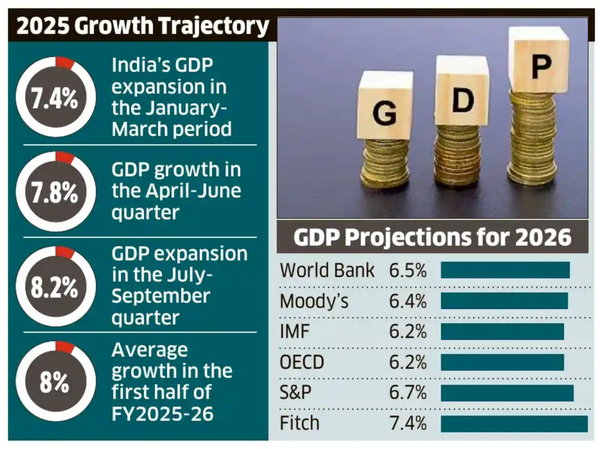
The country's GDP expanded by 7.4% in the January-March period, the first quarter of the 2025 calendar year. In the April-June quarter, the GDP growth rose to 7.8%. An even bigger surprise came in the July-September quarter, when the GDP expanded by 8.2%, surpassing most estimates by a wide margin.

The average growth in the first half of FY2025-26 stood at 8%. The Economic Survey tabled in Parliament in January-end 2025 has pegged the 2025-26 GDP growth in the range of 6.3-6.8%. The first two quarter numbers far-exceed this projection. This was despite the imposition of an unexpected 50% tariff on the majority of Indian goods by the Trump administration, with effect from August 27.

Analysts expect the GDP growth momentum to soften in the second half of the current fiscal. According to ICRA, the GDP growth is likely to decline to around 7% in the second half of 2025-26, from 8% in the first half.

"Growth outcomes have panned out better than expectations in 2025. This has benefitted from sizable policy stimulus, including income tax relief GST rate rationalisation, 125 bps policy rate cuts and liquidity support. A sharp dip in inflation eased pressure on household budgets and an above-normal monsoon boosted crop output," said Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist at ICRA.

Inflation has softened progressively, declining from 4.26% in January 2025, to 0.71% in November 2025, as per the latest official data.


2025 Growth Trajectory
7.4% India's GDP expansion in the January-March period
7.8% GDP growth in the April-June quarter
8.2% GDP expansion in the July-September quarter
8% Average growth in the first half of FY2025-26
G D P
GDP Projections for 2026
World Bank 6.5%
Moody's 6.4%
IMF 6.2%
OECD 6.2%
S&P 6.7%
Fitch 7.4%

### 2026 momentum

Most institutions expect India's GDP growth momentum to soften in 2026, but will remain the world's fastest growing major economy.

According to the World Bank, India's GDP is projected to grow by 6.5% in 2026. Moody's has pegged it at 6.4% in 2026 and 6.5% in 2027. The IMF has pegged India's GDP growth at 6.6% for 2025, and 6.2% for 2026. The OECD forecasts 6.7% growth in 2025, and 6.2% in 2026; S&P anticipates growth of 6.5% in the current fiscal and 6.7% in the next; the Asian Development Bank has lifted its 2025 forecast to 7.2%; and Fitch has raised its FY26 projection to 7.4% on stronger consumer demand.

According to Nayar, the global headwinds would pose challenges to the Indian economy in 2026. "We expect the GDP growth to accelerate to 7.4% in FY2026, from 6.5% in FY2025, albeit with a slower growth in H2 vis-à-vis H1. Thereafter, growth is expected to range between 6% and 7% in FY2027, with the upper end of the range likely to materialise if the trade deal is struck before the next fiscal begins and new constraints are not imposed on the services trade front," she added.

# PM for mission-mode reforms to sustain long-term growth

Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a pre-Budget meeting with economists and sectoral experts at NITI Aayog in New Delhi on Tuesday. PTI

NEW DELHI, PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday called for mission-mode reforms across diverse sectors to sustain long-term growth to achieve the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Interacting with a group of eminent economists and experts at NITI Aayog, ahead of the Union Budget for 2026-27, Modi also made a case for building world-class capabilities and attaining global integration. The theme of the interaction was 'Aatmanirbharta and Structural Transformation: Agenda for Viksit Bharat'.

He stressed that India's policy-making and budgeting must remain anchored with the vision for 2047.

The PM spoke about the need to ensure that the nation remains a vital hub for the global workforce and international markets.

Speaking about Viksit Bharat as a national aspiration, he noted that the vision of a developed India by 2047 has transcended government policy to become a genuine mass aspiration.

The economists shared strategic insights on enhancing productivity and competitiveness across the manufacturing and services sectors.

The participants also noted that the unprecedented flurry of cross-sectoral reforms in 2025, and their further consolidation in the coming year, will ensure that India continues to chart its path as one of the fastest growing global economies by strengthening its foundations and unlocking newer opportunities.

The discussion focused on accelerating structural transformation through increased household savings, robust infrastructure development, and the adoption of cutting-edge technology.

The group explored the role of AI as an enabler of cross-sectoral productivity and also discussed the continued scaling of India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI).

# Rupee rises 23 paise to close at 89.75/$

**MUMBAI, PTI:** The rupee rose 23 paise to close at 89.75 against the greenback on Tuesday, primarily on account of dollar selling by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Strong industrial output numbers supported the local unit, but a stronger greenback, higher global crude oil prices, and foreign fund outflows prevented sharper gains, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 89.98 against the dollar and touched the intraday high of 89.72 against the greenback during the session. The local unit eventually settled at 89.75, up 23 paise from its previous close.

The rupee depreciated 8 paise to close at 89.98 against the US dollar on Monday.

"The rupee remained on the weaker side since morning, but later yielded to the constant selling by the RBI, which took it up to 89.72, before buyers came back and bought dollars. The rupee has been gravitating between 89.50 and 90 in the last few days, with the RBI for now protecting 90, but they will buy (dollars) at 89/89.20 to cover their short positions," Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP, said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading marginally higher by 0.06% to 97.99.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.47% higher at $62.23 per barrel in futures trade, amid thin year-end trading and ongoing concerns about global demand.

On the domestic equity market front, the 30-share Sensex ended 20.46 points lower at 84,675.08, while the Nifty slipped 3.25 points to 25,938.85. FIIs offloaded equities worth Rs 3,844.02 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

Government of Karnataka
**BIDAR INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, BIDAR.**
**(Autonomous Institution of Govt. of Karnataka)**
Affiliated to Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Karnataka, Bangalore & Recognized by Govt. of India, New Delhi
Phone: 08482 228366/ Fax No: 08482 240322 Website: http://bimsbidar.karnataka.gov.in & e-mail : directorbrimsbidar2007@gmail.com

NO: BRIMS/TENDER/COMPUTERS/CR- 05/2025-26 Date: 29/12/2025

**TENDER NOTIFICATION**

Bidar Institute of Medical Sciences, Bidar Invites e-tender from eligible bidders for the SUPPLY OF Desktop Computers, All in one printers and UPS TO BRIMS BIDAR iterested bidder can view, download and apply through ktpp portal www.kppp.karnataka.gov only for more information about can be contact/view at our website www.bims bidar.karnataka.gov.in Last date for submission of tender through ktpp portal is **12-01-2026** at the specified in e-tender.
1) **Tender Indent No:** DME/2025-26/IND1913, 2) **Name of the Tender:** Supply of Desktop Computers,All in one printers and UPS Brims Bidar. 3) **E.M.D:** 1,13,500.00.
**Note :** For further information about tender please contact Director Brims Bidar office, and if any further changes in tender will be published in KPPP website only.

**Sd/- DIRECTOR**
**Bidar Institute Of Medical Sciences,Bidar.**
DIPR/Bidar/280/KSMC&A/2025-26

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
**MINOR IRRIGATION & GROUND WATER DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**
**M.I & G.W.D.D. DIVISION, VIJAYAPUR**
No.EE/MID/VJP/AE-1,4/4702 & 2702/TND/2025-26/3652 Date: 29.12.2025
**SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION**

The Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation and Ground Water Development Department, Division Vijaypur invites work tenders through "E-Procurement" from eligible contractor on item rate Tender for following works as per KTPP Act-2000 and latest amendments.
**4702 Major Works :- 1)**Construction of BCB across Bori Nala near Konkanagaon Village in Chadachan Taluk of Vijayapur District, **Amount put to Tender Rs.799.79 Lakhs**, EMD **Rs.12,00,000-00, 2)**Construction of BCB across nala at Ingalagi-Kannolli Road in Devarahipparagi Taluk Vijayapur District, **Amount put to Tender Rs.121.04 Lakhs**, EMD **Rs.2,00,000-00, Tender Period for the above Sl.No.1 work is Eleven(11) Months including monsoon and Sl.No.2 work is Nine(9) Months including monsoon.**
**2702 M&R Works :- 1)**Repairs to Central Office Building, Minor Irrigation and Ground Water Development Department (North) Zone, Vijayapur, **Amount put to Tender Rs.101.53 Lakhs**, EMD **Rs.2,00,000-00, Tender Period for the above work is Six(6) Months including monsoon.**
Tender documents may be downloaded from Government of Karnataka E-Procurement website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/#/portal/portal-home under login for Contractors from **30.12.2025.** Tenders may be submitted on electronically in E-Procurement portal up to **17-30 hrs.** on **09.01.2026.** Interested contractors information regarding works may be obtained from this office or e-Procurement helpdesk (Ph.No.080-25501216 & 080-25501227) upto **17-30 hrs.** on **08.01.2026.** Pre-bid meeting will be held on **06.01.2026** for work costing above 1.00Crore in the office of the Executive Engineer, MI&GWDD Division, Vijaypur. Tenders shall be quoted without adding GST and other details can be seen in the tender documents.

**Sd/- Executive Engineer,**
**MI & GWDD Division, Vijayapur**
ಪಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ವಿಜಯಪುರ/574/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26

**BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD**
**INVITATION FOR TENDER**
**(only through KPP Portal)**
**BWSSB invites Tenders from Registered Contractors for the following works.**

**Office of the Chief Engineer (West), 6th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009**

| Sl No. | Division | IFT Number | Amount put to Tender / EMD Amount | Last date & time for Submission of Tender | Date & time for Opening of Tender |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | West-1 | BWSSB/EEW-1/TO/PB/5043/ 2025-26 Dated: 30.12.2025 | ₹ 22,38,222/- / ₹ 50,000/- | 08.01.2026 upto 4:00 pm | 09.01.2026 after 4:30 pm |
| 2. | | BWSSB/EEW-1/TO/PB/5043/ 2025-26 Dated: 30.12.2025 (Reserved for Category-II(A)) | ₹ 56,66,363/- / ₹ 56,700/- | | |
| 3. | | BWSSB/EEW-1/TO/PB/5043/ 2025-26 Dated: 30.12.2025 (Reserved for Category-II(A)) | ₹ 26,47,610/- / ₹ 26,500/- | | |
| 4. | | BWSSB/EEW-1/TO/PB/5043/ 2025-26 Dated: 30.12.2025 | ₹ 24,22,736/- / ₹ 50,000/- | | |
| 5. | | BWSSB/EEW-1/TO/PB/5043/ 2025-26 Dated: 30.12.2025 | ₹ 33,93,973/- / ₹ 67,900/- | | |

**Sd/- Executive Engineer (West-1)**

**Office of the Engineer in Chief , 2nd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. | UFW-2 | BWSSB/EE(UFW)-2/PB/807/ 2025-26 Dated: 29.12.2025 (2nd Call) | ₹ 79,96,168/- / ₹ 1,60,000/- | 06.01.2026 upto 4:00 pm | 07.01.2026 after 4:05 pm |

**Sd/- Executive Engineer (UFW)-2**

The detail regarding the tender & participation in the e-procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** For further details contact the above signed office during working hours.
DIPR/CP/4733/CCL/2025-26

# Where's the party tonight? A lowdown

Rental villas, hostels and apartments located on the outskirts and tech corridors of the city have emerged as a popular choice with Bengalureans for NYE parties.

## Some Bengalureans are renting villas to escape the crowds and traffic

**SHRADDHA A K**
TEAM METROLIFE

Rental villas have emerged as a popular choice with Bengalureans for New Year's Eve parties.

Both old and young are giving popular pubs and restaurants a miss and heading to private properties located on the outskirts of the city to spend the night.

Kshitija K, a college student, told *Metrolife* that an unexpected crowd experience during Christmas shaped her plans for New Year's. "We ended up on Church Street on Christmas. And we had to contend with a large crowd," she says. To avoid a repeat, she is hosting a house party at a villa near Kengeri. While villas offer privacy and amenities like pools, they can be expensive. "The costs work out only when they are shared among larger groups, especially for food and drinks," she adds.

This shift isn't limited to younger crowds. Anish P, an IT consultant in his 40s, is hosting a villa party near Doddaballapur. "It becomes like a getaway. We also skip the hassle of cleaning up," he says.

Demand for short-term stays has surged. Villa 8485, located off Airport Road in Vaderpura, is sold out for New Year's Eve, while its sister properties on Ittamadu Road and in J P Nagar are nearly booked out as well.

### Public transport support tonight

- Women cab and auto drivers for women commuters at cab and auto pickup/drop points across select junctions.
- Namma Metro and BMTC bus services extended until 2 am.

### Not partying?

Some young Bengalureans are choosing alternative ways to welcome the new year. These include road trips, midnight runs and hikes, binge-watching films, and even trying New Year's Eve superstitions from around the world, such as eating grapes under the table or wearing specific-coloured undergarments for luck, health, wealth and love.

### Hostel stays

Some revellers, like Shravan Shetty and Felix Thomas, are booking hostels close to party hotspots. "We chose a hostel close enough to walk to, so we don't have to deal with cabs or driving," Thomas explains. "It's budget-friendly, and we're only paying for a few hours of sleep."

Udayan Deshpande, Airbnb superhost and community leader for Airbnb Karnataka, notes a shift in booking patterns. While Airbnb does not promote house parties as a standard, he says Bengaluru continues to see high demand for flats and villas for small gatherings. "Most inquiries are from smaller groups of four to six people, typically in their mid-30s to late 40s," he says. "They book an apartment or two in central Bengaluru, cook at home, and keep it low-key rather than hosting loud parties."

Deshpande also notes a rise in staycations compared to last year, particularly in areas close to workplaces and tech corridors, such as Whitefield, Domlur, and HSR Layout. "People — especially those living in PGs or smaller homes — are booking nearby properties to host friends," he says. Villas on the city's outskirts remain consistently popular for house parties, regardless of the occasion. Another contributing factor this year is increased airfare, partly due to the IndiGo airline crisis. "Usually, people travel to places like Goa, Puducherry, or Mumbai. This year, many seem to be staying back in the city," he says.

## Big on grazing tables, carving stations

### Many caterers and chefs offering private dining reported a spike in home celebrations this month

**BARKHA KUMARI**
TEAM METROLIFE

House parties in Bengaluru this December stood out for their elaborate spreads, dominated by appetisers, and presented tastefully. Many hosts hired professional chefs, while demand for bartenders exceeded availability. In some cases, per-plate costs can range from Rs 4,000-Rs 5,500 for intimate gatherings of 10, dropping to Rs 1,500-Rs 2,500 for larger groups.

### Assorted appetisers

Grazing tables, which gained popularity in India after the pandemic, were a common fixture, fuelled by social media buzz. These large displays of cheeses, breads, fruits, meats, and bite-sized snacks allow guests to nibble at their own pace. "They look beautiful, and from a catering perspective, they appeal to many tastes," says Amiel Guerin, chef-founder of Amiel Gourmet.

Smaller formats, called grazing boards or platters, moved even faster. Jyoti Kariwala, owner-founder of Lemon Krust, made brisk sales delivering her 12×12 inch disposable grazing boards, priced at Rs 2,000. "Each serves five people and includes seven to eight items," she says. On BookMyChef, clients wary of imported cheese prices opted for mezze-based grazing boards, also featuring Arabian and Mexican salads and English tea biscuits, says chief marketing officer Saurabh Agrawal.

Tapping into regional flavours, Karan Upmanyu's team at Push Pause Hospitality curated an Indian-inspired grazing table for Christmas. It featured south Indian snacks like achappams, murukkus, nevris, and kulkuls, paired with a yoghurt and bathua dip, and Indian-made cheeses like brie, and goat cheese with pistachios.

### Exotic ingredients

Guerin took on fewer house parties this year to focus on elevating festive food with high-quality produce. Clients are willing to spend more towards year-end, he says. "We did lavish spreads with imported turkeys, morels, asparagus, truffles, foie gras, Madagascar vanilla, and Belgian chocolate," he says. Menus included 10-12 varieties of canapes featuring crab, salmon, tuna, lamb, and turkey.

Susan George, owner-chef at Xanadu Kitchen, says Bengalureans are seeking more celebratory Western meals now because of the easier access to exotic ingredients. Her pecan pie and roasted Brussels sprouts were favourites this year. "I also did elaborate roast chicken with apple stuffing and cranberry gravy. Requests for pumpkin pie were more common than before," she says. On his platform, Agrawal noted growing demand for chefs specialising in Japanese sushi, or Korean food, as part of larger dinner menus.

### No fried foods

Shamanth R G of Aalaya Hospitality saw a 20% rise in requests for no-fried snacks. Popular dishes included roasted sweet potatoes with hummus, air-fried beetroot chips with mustard sauce, egg whites with spinach chutney, and avocado chaat. Jyoti saw a surge in demand for vegan and gluten-free desserts such as mango and chocolate chia puddings, and whole wheat jaggery plum cakes. Upmanyu's team curated parties built entirely around barbecued dishes and salads, including one with a no-carb menu.

A grazing table, curated by Jyoti Kariwala, was the centre of attraction at a house party in Bellandur.

### Live counters

Guerin's team reported a spike in demand for carving stations serving turkey, honey glazed ham, and beef Wellington, along with pastry and flambe counters. Appam-stew stations were a hit for Travancore Tasties, run by Tresa Francis.

### Sours are back

Bengalureans are moving away from straight drinks, like whisky or vodka, and towards longer cocktails meant for slow sipping and socialising. "Classic sours like Palomas and Picantes are back, along with spirit-forward drinks such as martinis with olive brine or experimental fusions using appemidi and chilli brine and mahua flowers," says Upmanyu. The hosts are also asking for glassware to match the drink (champagne flutes and cocktail coupes), clear ice balls instead of cubes, and bar trolleys stocked with garnishes.

A bartender who catered house parties this season says that this year's cocktails relied on cordials rather than simple sugar syrups, as well as techniques like fat-washing and clarification.

## Scam alert: Don't click on APK links disguised as festive greetings

TEAM METROLIFE

The Bengaluru City Police (BCP) and the Karnataka Criminal Investigation Department (CID) have cautioned the public against clicking on links attached to festive greetings. In a recent advisory, they warned that cybercriminals are targeting users with malicious third-party Android Package Kits (APKs), disguised as celebratory messages. Scammers tend to circulate fake links through platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram and Instagram or via email and SMS, prompting users to download them under the guise of offers, refunds, or updates. Once installed, these APKs can steal personal and financial information, a senior BCP official warned. He advised citizens to avoid clicking on links attached to photos or videos, and to refrain from downloading celebratory images sent in document format from both known and unknown contacts. These may contain malware, he says.

## Doctors warn of alcohol risks

**ANUSHA MARY JONES**
TEAM METROLIFE

As Bengaluru counts down to New Year's Eve, doctors warn of the health risks associated with heavy drinking and substance use.

Citing a *Lancet* study, Dr Naveen Thomas, paediatric surgeon and former director of Bangalore Baptist Hospital, warns that the consumption of alcohol impairs the brain's frontal lobe functioning. Alcohol, a proven carcinogen, increases the long-term risk of cancers of the stomach, liver, breast and gastrointestinal tract, he adds.

An expert in adolescent medicine says mass media romanticising drinking, coupled with peer pressure, is drawing teenagers towards alcohol. Easy access through unsupervised house parties, fake IDs, and poor scrutiny at MRP stores is compounding the problem. "Alcohol stimulates parts of the teenage brain that are more vulnerable to addiction. Their prefrontal cortex is not fully mature," she explains.

She also warns against binge drinking patterns. This refers to men consuming more than five drinks or women having four drinks within two hours. It can lead to alcohol poisoning, cognitive impairment, severe gastritis, and suppression of protective reflexes. Alcohol intoxication can also lead to loss of muscle coordination, leading to a failure of airway reflexes during vomiting and increasing the risk of death, she adds.

## What writers loved reading in 2025

### Bengaluru's literati reveal what books excited them the most

**RASHMI RAJAGOPAL**
TEAM METROLIFE

#### Mamta Sagar, poet

Kannada author Vinay Gunte's collection of short stories — 'Banada Karadi Mattu Itara Kathegalu' — was one of the best books I read in 2025. His style of expression in Kannada is unique and fresh. He tackles topics like marginalisation and discrimination in urban settings.

I also reread 'The Hindi Public Sphere 1920-1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism' by Francesca Orsini. She was invited to India for a conference but after she landed in Delhi, the government did not allow her to enter the country, and sent her back to London.

Apparently, they found her book offensive. It is important today to respond to the injustices happening around us. I also revisited books by Manto and Ismat Chughtai.

#### Anita Nair, novelist

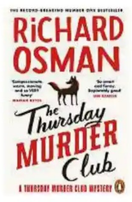
My pick is 'James' by Percival Everett. I received this book very early, in January 2025, and despite the 50 odd books I read this year, nothing quite compared to this brilliant and at times heart-wrenching novel.

A reimagining of 'The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn' but told through the perspective of the fugitive slave Jim. The original, which I read and re-read as a child, suddenly acquired claws and fangs and became an account of brutal white supremacy that saw slaves as less than human.

In many ways, it is the story of the oppressor and the oppressed played out in different parts of the world, including India.

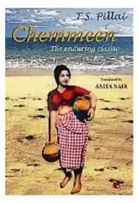
#### Harini Nagendra, author

I enjoyed reading all the books from the 'The Thursday Murder Club' series by Richard Osman. The series is centred on a retirement home, where a group of pensioners, comprising a former spy, nurse, psychiatrist, and union leader, come together to solve murders. The series keeps getting better with every new book. I love the way Osman writes about older people. It is great to read how they all put their heads together to use their experiences and skills to uncover the identity of the killers.




#### Madhu Y N, author

This year, I read the English translation of the popular Malayalam novel 'Chemmeen' by Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai. The iconic Malayalam film of the same name is an adaptation of the 1956 book.

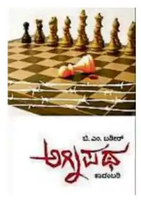



I like the way the author writes about the class struggles of that era and region. It is a tragic love story of a Muslim trader, Pareekutty, and Karuthamma, daughter of a fisherman.

I also read the English translation of the 1949 Hindi novel 'Gunahon Ka Devta' by Dharamvir Bharati. It is titled 'Chander and Sudha' in English. Chander is in love with his professor's daughter, but due to circumstances, convinces her to marry another man. The consequences are catastrophic. I enjoyed reading how the author describes the clash of ideals in this romance novel.

In Kannada, I read 'Jeevarathi' by J N Tejashri. It tells the multigenerational story of a family of farmers living in Kodagu. The writer is a poet, so the prose reads like poetry. It is narrated like a collage of pictures, rather than as a novel.

#### Nataraj Huliyar, author



The best book I read this year was B M Basheer's 'Agnipatha', a Kannada novel that portrays the communal tensions, the loss of innocence, and paradoxes of contemporary Indian society. The narrative is uncomplicated yet tense, which makes it more compelling. A distinct Kannada poet, the author is a desk editor at 'Vartabharati', a Kannada daily.

## On a long-haul bus ride? Some advice

### In the wake of the Chitradurga bus fire, experts share what to check for before boarding and en route

**TINI SARA ANIEN**
TEAM METROLIFE

The December 25 fire tragedy in Chitradurga involving a luxury sleeper bus has brought the safety of long-distance bus travel back into focus. The tragedy killed at least six people. The bus was heading from Bengaluru to Gokarna.Experts outline warning signs passengers should watch out for and the steps they can take.

Omkareshwari M P, additional commissioner of transport (Enforcement South), says items such as alcohol, perfumes, highly inflammable toiletries, electronic devices, and batteries are not allowed to be carried in bulk. Subhash Kumar, director of 3S Life Safe Akademie, a fire and safety training institute, advises passengers to carry minimal hand baggage inside the bus. "Large bags placed in aisles or near seats can obstruct movement during emergencies," he says. Once on board, passengers should check whether emergency exits, glass-breaking hammers and fire extinguishers are in place, and alert bus staff if exits or passageways are blocked. While booking, Kumar suggests opting for lower berths and seats closer to exits for quicker evacuation.

Most long-distance buses are either internal combustion engine (ICE) or electric vehicles (EVs), says Sridhar R, professor of automotive mechatronics at R V College of Engineering.

"ICE buses often show early warning signs such as smoke or unusual smells, while fires in EVs can escalate rapidly with few or no visible warnings," he explains. Passengers must immediately alert the driver if they notice smoke, burning smells or unusual sounds. If they see a fellow passenger smoking, they should bring it to the attention of the bus staff. In case of a small, manageable fire, he suggests using blankets provided in sleeper buses. "Pour water on them and use them to douse the flames," Kumar adds.

#### Inform the RTO

If passengers notice suspicious or dangerous items being loaded into long-distance buses, they should report them to the transport department. Complaints, along with photographs, the vehicle registration number, and bus operator details, can be sent on WhatsApp to 94498 63459. The department's control room number is 94498 63429 (10 am to 6 pm).

#### New SOPs soon

Following recent fire accidents, including the Kurnool bus fire on October 24, the transport department has intensified checks at major boarding points such as Majestic, Kalasipalya and Anand Rao Circle. "A new standard operating procedure focusing on safety measures will be issued shortly," adds Omkareshwari.

The department is also planning an audio announcement inside buses, similar to airline safety briefings, to familiarise travellers with emergency exits and safety equipment.

The Chitradurga bus fire on December 25 killed at least six people. CREDIT: PTI

## POPCORN

### Hello waiter

Scientists say the world is slowing down, and in the distant future, we will have 25-hour days instead of 24-hour ones. Slower rotation means different things to different people. N R Narayana Murthy may ask you to work seven additional hours — one extra for each day — in addition to the recommended 70. Elon Musk, who thinks AI will soon make work optional for humans, may be dreaming of devoting more time to video gaming. And here in Bengaluru, rest assured you will get more time to listen to your favourite music on the car stereo as you wait for the signal to turn green. Yeah, the one at the end of the tunnel road.

## CITY MIX

### Jan 1: 26 km walk to improve footpath infra

On New Year's Day, Walkaluru is inviting citizens to join a free 26 km walk along footpaths. Walkaluru is a joint initiative of citizens and the Greater Bengaluru Authority and aims to promote walking and improve pedestrian infrastructure. The walk will start at 7 am from R V Road metro station and end at 4 pm at Sandal Soap Factory metro station. The group will take a refreshment break every 5 km. Citizens can join at any point by following the live location shared on a WhatsApp group, and drop out at any time.

*Visit @walkaluru on Instagram for details.*

### Registration for nature guide course open

The Naturalist School is launching a weekend-only Certified Nature Guide Course for local youth in and around Hesaraghatta, which has recently been notified as the Greater Hesaraghatta Grassland Conservation Reserve. The course begins on January 3 and will conclude in March. This course is supported by Bengaluru Sustainability Forum.

*For details and registration, write to courses@naturalist.school, or call 97411 17734.*

## EVENTS

### Remembering SPB

S P Charan will pay tribute to his father, multilingual singer S P Balasubrahmanyam, in the charity concert 'An Evening to Remember — Evergreen SPB' on January 4, 5 pm, at Prestige Centre for Performing Arts, Konanakunte. Tickets online.

### Wildlife film

'Land of the Blackbuck', a 23-minute English film on India's grasslands and their importance, will be screened on January 3, 6.30 pm, at Bangalore International Centre, Domlur. RSVP to bangaloreinternationalcentre.org

### Charity play

Bangalore Little Theatre will stage a charity play 'The Star', inspired by a short story by film director Satyajit Ray, on January 3, 7 pm, Atta Galatta, Indiranagar. The play explores the theme of second chances in life. Tickets online.

Enrique Collar

## Atletico legend Collar dies at 91

**MADRID, AFP:** Atletico Madrid on Monday announced the death at 91 of club legend Enrique Collar, who captained the team to a league title and three cup successes in the 1960s.

"The red and white family loses a symbol who gave everything to take Atletico Madrid to the pinnacle of national and continental football," the club said in a statement.

The left winger scored 105 goals in 470 appearances for Atletico between 1953 and 1969 and captained the side for 10 years in the 1960s, making him the club's longest-serving skipper.

He was on the scoresheet as Atletico defeated eternal rivals Real Madrid at the Bernabeu in the 1960 cup final, before winning further cups in 1961 and 1965.

His leadership also saw the Spanish capital's less fashionable team claim the 1965/66 league title in a decade where Real dominated the top flight.

Collar also won the 1962 European Cup Winners' Cup and earned 16 caps for Spain, playing at the 1962 World Cup in Chile. He retired in 1970 after a season at Valencia.

BADMINTON

# Shikha-Ashwini are no fluke

## After nationals' title, K'taka pair eyes Worlds' qualification

**HITA PRAKASH**
BENGALURU, DHNS

Ashwini Bhat K adores Shikha Gautam's double action and court coverage. And Shikha is a fan of Ashwini's deceptive wrist work and interceptions at the net. Consciously reacting to each others' strength and weakness has helped the two shuttlers become one of the most formidable women's doubles badminton pairs in the country.

The on-court chemistry between the two was unmistakable from the moment they teamed-up for the first time six years ago. The withdrawal of another pair a few days before the 2019 Senior Nationals made way for the Nasik-born Shikha and Bengaluru's Ashwini to join forces and enter the tournament.

"We had practiced only for two days before the start of that event," Shikha tells *DH*. "I was mainly playing singles and Ashwini was competing in mixed doubles. But we got together, won one round after the other and became champions in the very first tournament," reminisces the 27-year-old.

"People called it a fluke," adds Ashwini. "But now we have won it for a second time and several all-India's in between. Now what will people have to say" questions the 25-year-old.

It was a victory that Shikha and Ashwini desperately needed. Not only to reply to their naysayers, but also to boost their own belief after having put in the hard work for two years without missing a single session of training.

Representing Karnataka, the duo annexed the women's doubles title at the 87th Senior National Championships in Vijaywada on Sunday by defeating known foes Priya Devi Konjengbam of Manipur and Shruti Mishra of Uttar Pradesh with a 21-14, 21-18 scoreline in the final.

Shikha and Ashwini were bought together for the first time by head coach Jagadish Yadav of the Yadav Pro Badminton Academy in Bengaluru.

"Since Shikha played singles, she had good shot selection acumen along with fast legs for good court coverage. Ashwini was a junior doubles champion in all the age categories and had good knowledge about doubles," explains Jagadish about his wards.

Ashwini Bhat K (left) and Shikha Gautam became Karnataka's only women's doubles pair to win the Senior National Championships' title in Vijayawada on Sunday.

"But more than being technically and tactically sound, doubles is about having a good bond on and off the court. I would observe these girls fight with each other regularly but patch-up every single time almost immediately. Strangely, I thought such chemistry would work well as a doubles team. And my bet has paid off."

A season that has now ended on a high also had the pair finish on the podium multiple times. Shikha and Ashwini won a bronze each at the BWF Mangalore International Challenge, Guwahati Open and Odisha Open (both BWF World Tour Super 100s) a few weeks before the Nationals in Vijaywada. The pair also finished runners-up at the Dutch Open, also a WT Super 100 event, in October.

"After a few health issues to both of us last year (2024), we have been able to perform more consistently this season," says Shikha as Ashwini adds: "Of course, we need to improve on the world rankings. Our aim for 2026 is to make it to the World Championships that will be hosted in our country."

"Top-25 by March 2026 is the target I have set for them because they are capable of it," coach Jagadish feels.

Their highest world ranking of 33 came in 2023. Currently 56th on the ranking chart, Shikha and Ashwini are aware that the climb back is an arduous task. But the girls are now motivated than ever before to chase that dream -- largely funded by both their parents.

# Bindra's Task Force points out deficits

## 'Set up council for sports education, capacity building'

NEW DELHI, PTI

Abhinav Bindra

An Abhinav Bindra-led Task Force set up by the Sports Ministry has pointed out "systemic deficits" in India's sports administration, including "inadequate and ill-equipped" athletes for governance roles, and recommended the setting up of an autonomous statutory body to train a specialised cadre that would also feature IAS officers.

The 170-page report of the Task Force has been submitted to Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, who on Tuesday said "all its recommendations will be implemented".

To address the current "gaps" that ail the Sports Authority of India (SAI), the National Sports Federations (NSFs) and the state departments, the committee has recommended that a National Council for Sports Education and Capacity Building (NCSECB) be set up under the Ministry "to regulate, accredit, and certify sports administration training."

The nine-member Task Force was set up in August this year and featured, among others Adille Sumariwala and former Target Olympic Podium Scheme's CEO Cdr. Rajesh Rajagopalan.

### Athletes in governance

The panel noted that while the soon-to-be-implemented National Sports Governance Act makes athlete representation in NSF Executive Committees mandatory, there is no system in place to train them for the job.

"India does not yet have a structured Dual Athlete Career Pathway integrated with the Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model, which supports athletes in combining elite performance with education, leadership, and governance skills," it said.

"...the real gap lies in athlete preparedness to take up these governance and leadership roles effectively as most athletes retire without the relevant skills in administration."

## National Athletes' Forum on Jan 10

**NEW DELHI, PTI:** Indian Olympic Association (IOA) will organise the first National Athletes' Forum on January 10 in Ahmedabad with an aim to strengthen athlete-led governance and accountability in the country's sport.

The Forum will bring together current and former athletes, athlete representatives, and key stakeholders from across the country for direct, solution-oriented engagement, the IOA said in a release.

The Forum will focus on critical issues, including athlete rights and responsibilities, ethical and transparent governance, safe sport and integrity, mental health and well-being, anti-doping education, grievance redressal, and structured career transition pathways.

Discussions will be towards converting athlete feedback into actionable reforms.

# Composed teenager Addya clinches junior trap gold

NEW DELHI, PTI

Delhi teenager Addya Katyal came up with a calm and composed performance to clinch the junior women's trap title in the National Shooting Championships at the Karni Singh Range here on Tuesday.

The 15-year-old took the top-podium spot with 42 hits, while Uttar Pradesh's Sabeera Haris ran her close before settling for silver with 41. Tanisska Senthilkumar of Tamil Nadu secured the bronze with 28 hits.

Addya had earlier topped the qualification round with an impressive 112 hits, and carried that strong form into the final.

Bhavya Tripathi of Delhi finished second in qualification with 110 but ended the final in sixth place.

Tanisska qualified third with 105, followed by Darshna Rathore of Rajasthan (104), Sabeera Haris (102), and Ananya Yaduvanshi of Delhi (101), completing the top-six who advanced to the medal round.

The final saw Addya maintain consistency under pressure, pulling away at the crucial stages. Sabeera mounted a strong challenge and remained in contention till the closing series, eventually finishing just one hit behind.

Tanisska stayed steady in the middle phase of the final to claim third place, while Darshna Rathore finished fourth with 23.

Delhi also claimed the junior women's trap team gold with a combined score of 323.

Addya Katyal (centre, gold), Sabeera Haris (left, silver) and Tanisska Senthilkumar.

## Ashwa Bravo races to Christmas Tree Plate

**DELHI RESULTS**

S Nawab-trained Ashwa Bravo, ridden by Vishal, won the Christmas Tree Plate, the feature event of the Delhi races on Tuesday.

**1. Cold Wave Plate - 1100M**: Nothing To Worry (Sunil Kumar Verma) Faizan Khan 1; Equal Luxury (Arjun) 2; Master Multitude (Irfan Khan) 3; Dashing Harry (Shivam) 4; Wb: 13-1/4, 8-1/4L, Shd. T: 1-05.53. TB: S.M.Abbas. Fav: Nothing To Worry.

**2. New Year Plate -1200M**: Jet Thunder (Ajay Kumar) Sunny Kumar 1 Humaira (Dhanu Deora) 2; Jet Space (Saurav Rawat) 3; Ashwa Yashvir (Sameer Qureshi) 4; Wb: 5-3/4, 9-1/2, 2-1/2l. T: 1-13.36. TB: Imdad Ali Khan. Fav: Jet Thunder.

**3. Christmas Tree Plate - 1600M**: Ashwa Bravo (Ravinder Pal Singh) Vishal 1; Lodge Keeper (S.G.Prasad) 2; Amazing A One (Aman) 3; Ashwa Vedha (Narendra Kumar) 4; Wb: Shd, 4, 10-3/4L. T: 1-36.69. TB: S.Nawab. Fav: Lodge Keeper.

**4. Santa Clause Plate - 1400M**: Ashwa Harbir (Mrs Sanyogita Chauhan) Narendra Kumar 1; Nashvegas (Varun) 2; Ashwa Gajraj (Kundan Paswan) 3; Lady Danger (Rakesh) 4; Wb: 3-1/2, 2, 3/4L. T: 1-27.01. TB: S.Nawab. Fav: Sidney Sussex.

**5. Christmas Cup (Div-I) - 1100M**: Golden Sun (Rajesh Sehgal) Dhanu Deora 1; Tomorrows Dreams (Vishal Shivhare) 2; Robust (Rakesh) 3; Bison (Faizan Khan) 4; Wb: 3-1/2, 4-1/4, 3/4L. T: 1-06.56. TB: V.S.Parmar. Fav: Golden Sun.

**6. Christmas Cup (Div-II) - 1100M**: Real Stuff (Rajesh Sehgal) Dhanu Deora 1; Master Stoute (Riazuddin) 2; Bumblebee (S.G.Prasad) 3; Maya (Deepak Kumar) 4. Not Run: Time To Win. Wb: 2-1/4, 1-1/2, 1-3/4L. T: 1-06.21. TB: Magan Singh. Fav: Real Stuff.

**Bengaluru dividends:**

**I race**: Rs 12w; 10, 15p; Fc: Rs 21; Q: Rs 27; Shp: Rs 23; Thp: Rs 29: Tri: Rs 29 & 18; Ex: Rs 57 & 37.

**II race**: Rs 19w; 12, 21p; Fc: Rs 42; Q: Rs 31; Shp: Rs 26; .Thp: Rs 37; Tri: Rs 74 & 26; Ex: Rs 164 & 165.

**III race**: Rs 36w; 12, 10, 23p; Fc: Rs 78; Q: Rs 37; Shp: Rs 29; Thp: Rs 47; Tri: Rs 431 & 331; Ex: Rs 803 & 235.

**IV race**: Rs 27w; 13, 14, 108p: Fc: Rs 181; Q: Rs 119; Shp: Rs 39; Thp: Rs 143; Tri: Rs 16,102 & 6,900; Ex: Rs 34,702 (c/o) & 7,436.

**V race**: Rs 16w; 12, 38, 14p; Fc: Rs 229; Q: Rs 180; Shp: Rs 94; Thp: Rs 40; Tri: Rs 1,155 & 569; Ex: Rs 23,606 & 30,350.

**VI race**: Rs 20w; 10, 27, 21p; Fc: Rs 145; Q: Rs 105; Shp: Rs 62; Thp: Rs 43; Tri: Rs 492 & 166; Ex: Rs 3,535 & 10,606.

**Jackpot**: Rs 3,123 (59).

**Runner-up**: Rs 823 (96).

**Treble**: Rs 206 (431).

# Carlsen wins Blitz title after Rapid gold, bronze for Erigaisi

DOHA, PTI

World No.1 Magnus Carlsen showed his endgame genius yet again to add a record-extending ninth world Blitz title to the Rapid gold medal he won two days back, but Indian Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi suffered a massive meltdown in the semifinal to settle for a bronze in the World Blitz Championship here on Tuesday.

Carlsen refused to accept a draw in the title showdown against young Uzbek GM Nodirbek Abdusattorov and came up with a unique pawn move out of nowhere in the fourth game of the title clash to win 2.5-1.5 and extend his reign in Blitz.

After the first three games, both the players were tied at 1.5 points each.

The victory was all the more sweet and fulfilling for the Norwegian after a string of losses in the qualifying (Swiss round) where he literally struggled to secure a place in the knockout semifinals.

A draw in Round 19 against Abdusattorov saw both Carlsen (13.5 points) and the Uzbek (13 points) secure the last two slots in the semifinals on Tuesday behind sole leader Erigaisi (15 points) and American GM Fabiano Caruana (14 points).

Magnus Carlsen

Carlsen then went on to beat Caruana 3-1 to secure a place in the final, while an impeccable Abdusattorov inflicted a shattering 2.5-0.5 semifinal defeat on Erigaisi, as the Indian settled for a second bronze, after taking the third-podium spot in Rapid on Sunday.

Nonetheless, the two bronze medals is a remarkable achievement for the 22-year-old Erigaisi, who will return home more resolute.

The achievement also made Erigaisi only the second Indian male player after the legendary Viswanathan Anand to win a World Blitz medal in the 'Open category'.

Earlier, Erigaisi, after stunning the likes of Carlsen and Abdusattorov to emerge sole leader with 10 points from 13 games, went through the remaining six rounds on Tuesday with steely resolve.

He won four and drew two to remain sole leader with 15 points to secure a place in the semifinals.

The Indian was drawn against 2021 World Rapid champion Abdusattorov, who secured a place in the last-four by the skin of the teeth, nudging Frenchman Maxime Vachier-Lagrave to fifth spot on 'best tie-break' rule after both the Grandmasters had ended on 13 points each.

With Erigaisi in stunning form and having the advantage of beating Abdusattorov on Monday, the Indian was expected to go full steam.

But things took a different and difficult turn for Erigaisi. He could not convert the advantage with white in the opening game, losing in 47 moves to be 0-1 down.

## Gujarat knock Karnataka out

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** A disciplined bowling by Achsah S Parmar and Sia A Patel's batting handed Gujarat a five-wicket win over Karnataka in the semifinal of the BCCI Women's Under-19 One-Day Trophy tournament in Pune on Tuesday.

Played at the Veerangan Cricket Academy Ground, Achsah claimed three wickets (3/15) and Yashvi grabbed two (2/30) as the duo combined well to dismiss Karnataka for 163 in 47 overs.

With most of her teammates struggling to stay on the crease, Deeksha J ended as the top-scorer with 34 runs.

Sia then took charge with the bat to coast to a 78-ball 87 while Yashvi Malam added 27 runs to take Gujarat across the line in a mere 30.5 overs.

Vandita K Rao's 3/23 for Karnataka went in vain.

**Brief scores: Semifinal:** Karnataka: 163 all out in 47 overs (Nandani Chauhan 29, Deeksha J 34; Yashvi Malam 2-30, Achsah S Parmar 3-15) lt to Gujarat: 169/5 in 30.5 overs (Sia A Patel 87, Yashvi Malam 27; Vandita K Rao 3-23).

## Royals crush Tigers in 5-0 win

**RANCHI, PTI:** Lucina von der Heyde struck a brace as Ranchi Royals registered a comfortable 5-0 victory over Shrachi Bengal Tigers in their second Women's Hockey India League match, here on Tuesday.

Apart from Von der Heyde (33', 57'), Royals scored through Hannah Cotter (10'), Beauty Dungdung (14') and Sangita Kumari (44').

Ranchi Royals started the match on a strong note, controlling possession and creating an array of chances.

In the first half, the Royals had made 17 circle entries asserting their dominance in attack.

In the fifth minute, the Ranchi outfit won the first penalty corner of the evening but couldn't score as Sabine Plonissen's shot was deflected away by the first rusher.

However, in the 10th, Royals scored the opening goal thanks to Cotter (10').

Sakshi Rana played a good pass into the circle from the left flank as the ball fell to Cotter after a deflection and she slotted it into the net.

In the 14th minute, Neha won another penalty, which was successfully converted.

**DIRECTORATE OF MINORITIES**
Maulana Azad Bhavan, No.16C, Miller Tank Bund Road, Vasantnagar, Bengaluru - 560 052.

No: DOM/DEVP/Group'C'/Tender/CR-04/2025-26 Date: 29.12.2025

**Corrigendum Notification**

For the year 2025-26, short-term re-tenders were invited online through e-procurement in a two-envelope system from recognized institutions to provide training for various Group 'C' posts competitive examinations for candidates from minority communities for a period of 3 months in Bengaluru, Dharwad, Kalaburagi & Mysuru districts by the Department of Minority Welfare, from **13-12-2025 to 29-12-2025.** It is hereby informed that the final date for submitting the tender has been **extended upto 03-01-2026 till 5:30 PM.**

Sd/-
Director
Directorate of Minorities, Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/4713/Maa/25-26

**KARNATAKA STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD**
Parisara Bhavana, No.49, Church Street, Bangalore-560001
Phone : 080-25581383, Fax : 080-25586321

No. PCB/04/BLD/2024/2025-26/3887 Dated: 23/12/2025

**INVITATION FOR TENDER (CALL-3)**
(Through e-Procurement portal)

The Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) invites tenders from eligible tenderers through GOK e-procurement platform http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in by The Member Secretary for the following work:

**Name of the work:** Upgradation of existing air testing laboratory in central environment laboratory-1 at KSPCB Nisarga Bhavan, S.G.Halli, Bengaluru. Approx Value of the work: **Rs.39.79 lakhs.** All payments such as tender cost, EMD etc., shall be made in e-payment mode only.

For more details, please refer e-procurement web site: http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

Sd/-
CHIEF ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER -2(A/C)
KSPCB

DIPR/CP/4725/AKAR/2025-26

**Our motto is to minimize waste generation through judicious use of natural resources**

**BENGALURU EAST CITY CORPORATION**
Office of the Executive Engineer, Marathalli Division,
Bellandur main road, Bellanduru, Bengaluru - 560103

No: BECC/EE/MRH/TN/04/2025-26 Date: 30-12-2025

**CORRIGENDUM**

**Sub: Correction of Tender Notification dates.**

**Ref: BECC/EE/MRH/TN/04/2025-26, Dated: 23.12.2025.**

This is to notify that, the last date for submission of bids in tender notification No. BECC/EE/MRH/TN/04/2025-26, Dated: 23.12.2025 is corrected as follows:

| For | Read as |
|---|---|
| 1) Last Date & submission of rates: 29-12-2025 Upto 4:00 P.M. | **05-01-2026 Upto 4:00 P.M.** |
| 2) Date & Time for Opening of bid: 31-12-2025 at 4.00 P.M. | **06-01-2026 Upto 4:30 P.M.** |

All other Terms and Conditions of the notification remains the same.

**Sd/- Executive Engineer, Marathalli Division, BECC**

**KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED**

CIN: U40109KA1999SGC025521

No.: EEE/PD/KPL/25-26/3182-3184 Date: 26-12-2025

**NOTIFICATION**

K.P.T.C.L. has formulated a scheme under Section 67 of the Electricity Supply Act 2003 and the same is herewith published in pursuance of Section 67(ii) of the said Act for information of the general public. Particulars of the scheme are as follows.

**1. Name of the Scheme:** Establishing 2x20 MVA, 110/11kV sub-station at Menadal village along with construction of 110kV DC line on DC towers (LILO) from the existing 110kV Sulekal-Tavaragera Line for a distance of about 0.70 kms. to the proposed 110/11kV Menadal sub-station in Kushtagi Taluk, Koppal District.

**2. Salient Features:** To improve the voltage and provide quality and reliable power supply to the consumers of Menadal, Sanganal, Garjinal, Hulihyder and surrounding village coming the limits of proposed 110kV sub-station, Menadal.

**3.** The above said line passes through following village.

District: **Koppal.** Taluk: **Kushtagi.** Hobli: **Tavaragera.** Village: **Menadal.** Survey Nos: **69/5, 69/6, 70/4, 70/3, 70/2, 70/1, 71/6 and 72.**

**4. Approximate Cost of the Project: Rs. 2371.83 Lakhs.**

The Corporation shall have and shall exercise all powers which the Indian Telegraph Act 1885 (13 of 1885) for carrying of above scheme. Objection to the scheme if any should be sent to the **Executive Engineer (Ele), Projects Division, KPTCL., Koppal within 30 days** from the date of publication of the notification for consideration by the Corporation. Objections received thereafter will not be considered.

**Sd/- Executive Engineer (Ele),**
**Projects Division, KPTCL, 110kV sub-station Premises,**
**Hosapete Road, Koppal - 583231.**

**Government of Karnataka**
**RURAL DRINKING WATER & SANITATION DEPARTMENT Office of Executive Engineer, Rural Water Supply & Sanitation Division Belagavi Near Krishna Devaraya Circle, 1" Floor of PRED Division, Nehru Nagar -590010**

No.RDW&S/BGM/PB-1,2, /TND- 17/ KW-3/2025-26 1858 Dated:28-12-2025

**ITEM RATE TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION (E-PROCUREMENT)**

I) The Executive Engineer, RDW&S Division, Belgaum invites item rate tenders on behalf of Governor of Karnataka State Government from the eligible contractors II) Indent Number: 9773,9768 Calendar events are as follows: 1) Last date & time for receipt of tenders through e-portal: 05-01-2026 before 17:00 hours. ii) Date of Opening of Technical Bid : 07-01-2026 before 11:00 Hours iv) Date of Opening of Financial Bid: After Technical Bid approval IV) Amount put to Tender, EMD, work completion period, Class of contractor,eligibility criteria are as published in e-procurement portal. (Including Rainy Season).More details can be had from the office of the undersigned and also through website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in by clicking list of Tenders which will link to all dept works list

Sd/-Executive Engineer,
RDW&S Division, Belgaum

DIPR/BGM/RO-NO-1547/KSMCA/2025-26

Isa Guha

## Former England cricketer Guha honoured with MBE

**LONDON, PTI:** Former cricketer Isa Guha, the first woman of South Asian descent to appear for England in any sport, was awarded an MBE in the King's New Year's Honours for services to inclusivity and cricket.

A two-time World Cup winner, Guha played eight women's Tests, 83 ODIs and 22 T20Is, taking a combined 148 wickets with her bustling medium pace.

Guha bid adieu to international cricket on March 9, 2012, the same day when former Indian skipper Rahul Dravid also retired from top-flight cricket.

Guha was just 26 when she decided to end her playing career to focus on a life outside cricket.

But not before she played a key role in England's wins in both the 50-over World Cup and the T20 World Cup in 2009.

## Bradman's baggy green worn against India up for auction

**SYDNEY, PTI:** A rare Baggy Green cap worn by the legendary Sir Donald Bradman during a 1947/48 series against India is set to go under the hammer next month.

Bradman gifted the cap to Indian all-rounder Sriranga Wasudev Sohoni during the series, which marked India's first international cricket tour as an independent nation.

Unlike most surviving Baggy Green caps from Bradman's era, many of which are preserved in museums or closely held private collections, this cap has never been publicly displayed or offered for sale.

## PCB parts ways with Mahmood

**LAHORE, PTI:** Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has parted ways with the national Test team head coach Azhar Mahmood three months before the expiry of his contract, according to sources.

The contract of Mahmood, a former Test all-rounder, runs until March 2026 but he has been given an early release. Pakistan's next Test assignment isn't until March 2026.

## Joshua 'stable' after car crash

**LAGOS, AP:** Anthony Joshua, the two-time former world heavyweight champion from Britain, is in a stable condition in the hospital after being involved in a car crash in Nigeria that killed two people who were close friends and team members, his promoter said.

It named Sina Ghami and Latif Ayodele as the two passengers who had "tragically passed away."

Authorities confirmed the accident in a post on X.

### ◆ ON TV ◆

**CRICKET**

**Vijay Hazare Trophy:** Jharkhand vs Tamil Nadu, Assam vs Uttar Pradesh **(both 9 am). LIVE** on **Star Sports Network, JioHotstar**.

**HOCKEY**

**HIL:** SG Pipers vs Soorma Hockey Club **(women, 7:30 pm). LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network**.

**CRICKET FIFTH T20I**

# Indians complete 5-0 clean sweep

## Harmanpreet, bowlers set up hosts' 15-run triumph

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PTI

Bowlers produced a spotless effort after skipper Harmanpreet Kaur led the way with a doughty 68 as dominant India defeated Sri Lanka by 15 runs in the fifth T20I to complete a 5-0 whitewash, here on Tuesday.

Harmanpreet's first fifty of the series came at an important juncture in the game when India were left struggling at 77 for five, as her 43-ball knock took the hosts to 175 for five.

Sri Lanka responded with half-centuries from opener Hasini Perera (65) and Imesha Dulani (50) but failed to find the flourish towards the end, finishing at 160 for seven. India thus capped an exceptional World Cup-winning year on a bright note.

Despite losing their skipper Chamari Athapaththu (2) early in the chase, Sri Lanka responded with a second-wicket partnership of 79 runs between Perera and Dulani which kept them in hunt.

Both Perera and Dulani batted with conviction to regularly find boundaries and rotated the strike well, but the failure to clear the ropes during their 56-ball association also meant that Sri Lanka remained slightly behind the asking rate.

Sri Lanka No. 3 Dulani cracked eight fours in her 39-ball innings and Perera held one end strongly with her 42-ball knock, but a slip-up in the form of wickets in cluster saw the required run rate moving past 13 per over.

Sri Lanka needed a big finish in the second half which they could not produce, as Indian spinners Deepti Sharma (1/28) and Vaishnavi Sharma (1/33) bowled stifling spells.

Amanjot Kaur (1/17) dismissed Dulani in the 12th over to give India the opening and Deepti capitalised on it.

Deepti trapped Nilakshika Silva leg-before in the 14th over to become the leading wicket-taker in women's T20Is with her 152nd dismissal in 134 matches at 18.62, going past Australia's Megan Schutt (151 wickets in 123 matches at 16.57).

Perera's fall in the 17th over shut the doors on the Islanders.

Earlier, a resolute knock from skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (68) and a late assault from Arundhati Reddy (27 not out) took India to a competitive 175 for seven. India were left tottering at 77 for five after 10 overs, but Harmanpreet stood tall with her first impactful knock of the series.

Later, Arundhati smacked four fours and a six to make a vital 11-ball 27 not out to push the hosts past the 150-mark.

Harmanpreet struck nine fours and a six in her 43-balls knock and dazzled with some powerful hits on both sides of the wicket, while her 61-run sixth wicket stand with Amanjot Kaur (21) was equally important.

For the large part of her knock, Harmanpreet kept losing partners which also dented India's hopes for a bigger total but with Amanjot, the Indian skipper ensured her bowlers had a total on board to defend.

**Brief scores:** India: 175/7 in 20 overs (Harmanpreet Kaur 68, Arundhati Reddy 27 n.o.; Kavisha Dilhari 2-11, Rashmika Sewwandi 2-42, Chamari Athapaththu 2-21) bt Sri Lanka: 160/7 in 20 overs (Hasini Perera 65, Imesha Dulani 50). **Result:** India won by 15 runs. **Series:** India win 5-match series 5-0. **PoM:** Harmanpreet Kaur. **PoS:** Shafali Verma.

Indian players celebrate with the trophy after beating Sri Lanka 5-0 in the five-match T20I series at the Greenfield International Stadium in Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday.

## Innings win raises K'taka's hopes of qualification

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** Suvik Gill churned out a match-winning 11-wicket haul while Niranjan Ashok and Rohith Reddy scored hundreds as Karnataka cruised home to an innings and 147-run victory in their Elite Vijay Merchant Trophy fixture against Goa inside two days at the RDCA Ground in Raipur on Tuesday.

Having picked up 5/32 in the first innings, Suvik (6/55) bagged his second five-for in as many days to roll Goa out for just 127 in 39 overs. Sukurth J (2/23), Athrav S Deshpande (1/19) and Vidhat S (1/3) shared four wickets between them.

Earlier in the day, openers Niranjan (130) and Rohith (104) stitched a brilliant 205-run partnership to lay a perfect platform. Karnataka posted 434 for six in 76 overs

With group toppers Madhya Pradesh already ahead on points, Karnataka's best chance to qualify for the next stage will be to finish second in Group D while hoping that Andhra drop points against Uttarakhand.

While a sixth-ranked team directly qualifies for the quarters along with the five table-toppers, teams ranked from 7-10 across five groups will battle it out in qualifiers.

**Brief scores:** Goa: 160 all out & 127 all out in 39 overs (Adeep Miskin 27; Suvil Gill 6-55) vs Karnataka (O/n: 154/0): 434/6 decl (Niranjan Ashok 130, R Rohith Reddy 104, Arush Jain 25, Syaamantak Anirudh 82, Sukurth J 37, Aditya Jha 25 n.o.; Mrunal Naik 3-130).

# On-song K'taka start strong favourites

## Defending champs look to consolidate their position vs Puducherry

VIGNESH BHARADWAJ
DHNS

An imperious batting line-up and an impeccable record make Karnataka the hot favourites when they meet Puducherry in their fourth Elite Vijay Hazare Trophy Group A fixture at the ADSA Railways Cricket Ground in Ahmedabad on Wednesday.

Karnataka have lost just one match in their last 13 VHT games and are on an eight-match unbeaten run, including a final in which they beat Karun Nair-led Vidarbha by 36 runs.

The defending champions would look to continue the good work in the ongoing competition and the focal point of their success has been the batting department, especially India international Devdutt Padikkal (293 runs), leading the parade with two hundreds, including a 147.

Last season's highest run-getter Karun has scored 176 runs at an average of 88 while Shreyas Gopal, who has been in tremendous form of late in red-ball cricket, is starting to look a lot like his Ranji Trophy-self, contributing with both bat and ball.

It is evident that Karnataka, who chased down targets in all three previous games, have looked immensely solid with contributions from their top-order, middle and lower-middle, highlighting their depth.

They chased down in excess of 400 against Jharkhand and romped home chasing 289 after being exposed to pressure at 94/3, with tournament centurions Padikkal and Karun making 39 runs in total.

While Karnataka have looked wobbly at times, especially with the ball in hand, they have not given their opponents – Jharkhand, Kerala and Tamil Nadu – any chance to stamp authority, as they sit second in Group A with 12 points.

Karnataka (0.370) are only behind group-toppers Madhya Pradesh (1.017) on Net Run Rate (NRR).

Head coach Yere Goud's side has also tried a few combinations, shuffling the debutants. All-rounder Dhruv Prabhakar played the first game while Hubli Tigers' left-arm spinner Shreesha Achar featured in the next two matches. And much to Karnataka's delight, both have played vital roles in their respective appearances.

Pace bowling too held its own under the circumstances that are more batter-friendly. Karnataka have rotated Vyshak Vijayakumar, Vidwath Kaverappa and Prasidh Krishna in the three matches. Left-arm seamer Abhilash Shetty has been prolific while young Vidyadhar Patil has been impressive.

Led by Chennai Super Kings' latest auction recruit, Aman Khan, Puducherry have endured a tough campaign, losing all three matches by huge margins. While a defeat to Karnataka on paper looks inevitable, they will hope to put up a good fight.

Devdutt Padikkal would hope for another solid outing against Puducherry, having already scored two hundreds.

# RCB's Perry opts out of WPL

BENGALURU, DHNS

Former champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru were handed a big blow before the start of next month's Women's Premier League season as their overseas star all-rounder Ellyse Perry has opted out of the T20 franchise tournament, citing personal reasons.

The 35-year-old Australian, who won the orange cap when RCB won the title in 2023 and was retained by the franchise for Rs 2 crore, was replaced by Indian medium-pace all-rounder Sayali Satghare, who appeared for Gujarat Giants last season and made her India debut earlier this year, confirmed a release from the BCCI. Apart from it, Perry's compatriot Annabell Sutherland won't feature for the Delhi Capitals citing personal reasons as well. The 24-year-old pace all-rounder is replaced by another Australian Alana King, a spin-bowling all-rounder who played for UP Warriorz last season.

UP Warriorz were forced to make a change too as American left-arm pacer Tara Norris, who became the first USA cricketer to play WPL in 2023 for Delhi Capitals, will be on national duty from mid-January for the T20 World Cup Qualifier in Nepal. Uncapped Australian all-rounder Charli Knott is her replacement for a reserve price of Rs 10 lakh.

RCB's star Australian player Ellyse Perry (left) was earlier retained by RCB for Rs 2 crore. PTI FILE PHOTO

## Injured Archer included in Eng T20 WC squad

**LONDON, AFP:** Fast bowler Jofra Archer was included in England's provisional T20 World Cup squad Tuesday, despite suffering a left side strain that ruled him out of the final two Ashes Tests.

Fellow quick Josh Tongue has been called up to the T20 squad for the first time in a 15-man party to be captained by Harry Brook for the tournament in India and Sri Lanka beginning on February 7.

Archer will sit out the warm-up tour to Sri Lanka next month to continue his rehabilitation following the injury sustained in Ashes.

**England squads: T20 World Cup & SL tour:** Harry Brook (capt), Rehan Ahmed, Jofra Archer, Tom Banton, Jacob Bethell, Jos Buttler, Sam Curran, Liam Dawson, Ben Duckett, Will Jacks, Jamie Overton, Adil Rashid, Phil Salt, Josh Tongue, Luke Wood, Brydon Carse (Sri Lanka tour only).

**Sri Lanka** ODI tour: Harry Brook (capt), Rehan Ahmed, Tom Banton, Jacob Bethell, Jos Buttler, Brydon Carse, Zak Crawley, Sam Curran, Liam Dawson, Ben Duckett, Will Jacks, Jamie Overton, Adil Rashid, Joe Root, Luke Wood.

## AGORC FC edge Blitz in 2-1 win

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** AGORC FC had some fortune going their way as an own goal and a Sudharshan V Lokur strike helped them edge Blitz FC 2-1 in the BDFA A Division League Championship at the Bangalore Football Stadium here on Tuesday.

LOCAL FOOTBALL

Blitz's Chetan Bhadrapur put the ball into his own net in the 14th minute to give the oppostion a 1-0 lead. Sudharshan doubled their advantage in the 53rd minute, handing them a 2-0 cushion.

Blitz pulled one back through Atharv Apurv Shukla in the 85th minute but it proved too late.

In the day's other fixtures, Real Chikkamagaluru FC and Roots FC played out a 1-1 draw while FC Deccan and Jawahar Union FC shared a point each.

**Results:** AGORC FC: 2 (Chetan Bhadrapur 14th own goal, Sudharshan V Lokur 53rd) bt Blitz FC: 1 (Atharv Apurv Shukla 85th); Real Chikkamagaluru FC: 1 (Dileep Gowda HC 28th) drew with Roots FS: 1 (Thangkaihao Haokip 27th); FC Deccan: 2 (LT Lowly 22nd, 90th+6 pen) drew with Jawahar Union FC: 2 (Lalminlian 50th, 68th).

Spartons Sports Club, winners of the KSCA Group I, IV Division league-cum-knockout tournament for the Metro Shield. STANDING (from left): Chinna, Ryan Tomar, Aditya Singh, Praveen Kumar ML, Harshit, Sanjay R, Lakshmi Sagar, Nouman, Tejas. SITTING: Nithin Naidu, Rohit Gowda , Virendra Singh (Captain), K Mehafuz Ali Khan (Secretary), Mohd. Taha (Coach), Desmond Anthony, Ashok D, Ayush Shetty.

# Spartons SC lift Metro Shield

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** In what turned out to be lopsided final, Spartons Sports Club defeated Sapphire Cricket Club by six wickets to emerge champions in the KSCA Group I, IV Division league-cum-knockout tournament for the Metro Shield here at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Tuesday.

Batting first, Sapphire innings crumbled to 101 all out in 35.4 overs in the face of a disciplined bowling by Spartons SC.

Angadraj Hittalamani 42 was the top-scorer with 42 as Aditya Singh claimed 3/16. Praveen Kumar ML, Ashok D and Nithin Naidu claimed two wickets apiece.

In reply, Spartons SC replied with 103/4 in 15.5 overs with Lakshmi Sagar (31) and Ashok (34) being the top-scorers.

**Brief scores**: Sapphire Cricket Club: 101 all out in 35.4 overs (Angadraj Hittalamani 42, Thrivarna Sagar 28; Praveen Kumar ML 2-9, Aditya Singh 3-16, Ashok D 2-40, Nithin Naidu 2/16) lt to Spartons Sports Club: 103/4 in 15.5 overs (Lakshmi Sagar 31, Ashok D 34).

# ISL cost puzzle deepens as budget estimation overshoots

ADITYA K HALDER
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Indian Super League clubs are trying to find common ground with the All India Football Federation (AIFF) over the start of the much-delayed season as the absence of a commercial partner continues to trouble an outcome.

With the idea of playing the league at two centralised venues (in Goa and Kolkata in two groups or conferences of east and west with each winner playing the final) seems a favoured option, the concerns over the cost deepened when the preliminary estimate for hosting the Goa leg alone was shared at Rs 42 crore uring an unofficial interaction on Tuesday.

The projected figure surprised many as this only covers one part of the league. The combined cost may exhaust AIFF's stated budget of Rs 70 crore under its proposed 20-year plan.

ISL trophy

Clubs have been told that they might have to contribute around Rs 2.5 crore in the season which was more than double the participation fee of Rs 1 crore proposed a few days earlier. Clubs earlier had broadly accepted the revised revenue-sharing formula put forward by the federation (in a 10-50-40 ratio among AIFF, clubs and commercial partners) but acceptance has always been conditional on AIFF finding a commercial partner.

"If the Goa leg alone is costing Rs 42 crore (for a curtailed season), the operational cost will go beyond the suggested budget of Rs 70 crore for a normal season," a club official told *DH*. "This is leading to confusion if the budget suggested is enough to run the league in a full season as well."

Meanwhile Jamshedpur FC have cleared their stance that they would play the upcoming season irrespective of the outcome between the federation and the clubs while Odisha FC said it will be difficult for them to play without a commercial partner while their CEO resigned.

Any formal meeting can only happen once AIFF receives clarity from the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) on a host of pending issues, including relaxation on the minimum number of domestic matches required for continental tournament qualification.

Printed and published by B A Ravi on behalf of The Printers (Mysore) Private Ltd, at The Printers (Mysore) Private Ltd, Plot nos. 7-12, Kumbalgodu Industrial Area, Bengaluru - 560 074. Executive Editor: K V Subramanya (Responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act). Editorial Office: 75, M.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560 001. E-mail: editor@deccanherald.co.in. Phone: 080-45557333, Editorial: 080-45557279/080-45557280, Circ: 080-45557204, Advt: 080-45557163/080-45557164. Also printed at Hubballi-Dharwad, Mangaluru, Kalaburagi, Davangere, Mysuru and Hosapete. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. RNI No 3608/57. Registered, Regn. No: KRNA/BGE/1027/2023-2025, posted at Bangalore PSO, Mysore Road, Bengaluru - 560 026. Website: www.printersmysore.com